

April 2016



Hangar Flying Newsletter

A Publication of the JBLM McChord Field Retiree Activities Office for Air Force Retirees, their spouses and survivors. Department of the Air Force, 100 Joe Jackson Blvd, Customer Service Mall Rm 1001, JBLM McChord Field WA 98438-1114; Phone (253) 982-3214 (Voice Mail 24 hours a day) Fax 253-982-5234. Email – retaffairs@us.af.mil Web Site www.mcchordrao.com Retiree Activities Office: Open 0900-1200 Monday - Friday

VA's Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry: VA's Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry, allows eligible Veterans to document their exposures and report health concerns through an online questionnaire.

Eligible Veterans include those who served in: Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation New Dawn, Djibouti, Africa on or after September 11, 2001, Operations Desert Shield or Desert Storm, Southwest Asia theater of operations on or after August 2, 1990.

Check your eligibility and sign up <https://veteran.mobilehealth.va.gov/AHBurnPitRegistry> . It takes about 40 minutes to complete the questionnaire. You can do it in one sitting or save it and come back later. You can print and use your completed questionnaire to discuss concerns with your provider. VA providers can also access an online copy of your questionnaire.

Important points about the Burn Pit Registry: **No cost** to participate, **Not a disability compensation questionnaire** or required for other VA benefits, Enrollment in VA's health care system **not necessary**, Based on **Veterans' recollection** of service, not on their military records, Veterans family members are **not eligible** to participate. Learn more in the [Fall 2015 issue of Post-9/11 Vet](#).

<http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/publications/oef-oif-ond/post-9-11-vet-fall-2015/burn-pit-registry.asp>

Findings

Data from the burn pit registry are available in the following reports:

- [Report](#) (1.68 MB, PDF) highlighting health conditions and physical limitations experienced by Veterans and Active Duty Servicemembers who filled out the registry survey between April 25, 2014 and December 31, 2014.
- [Report](#) (1.48 MB, PDF) on the health effects of exposures, including burn pits and other environmental hazards, experienced by Veterans and Active Duty Servicemembers who filled out the registry survey between April 25, 2014 and September 30, 2014.

If you have health concerns, talk to your health care provider or local VA Environmental Health Coordinator.

See more at: <http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/burnpits/registry.asp#sthash.vgLXduDC.dpuf> .

Multiple Myeloma and Agent Orange: Veterans who develop multiple myeloma and were exposed to Agent Orange or other herbicides during military service do not have to prove a connection between their disease and service to be eligible to receive VA health care and disability compensation.

About multiple myeloma, Multiple myeloma is a cancer caused by an overproduction of certain proteins from white blood cells. It is called multiple myeloma because it is characterized by plasma cell tumors in bones in multiple parts of the body. There are often no symptoms until the disease progresses. Symptoms include bone pain, unexplained bone fractures, repeated infections, weakness or numbness in the legs, abnormal proteins in the blood or urine, anemia, fatigue, and high level of calcium in the blood. Visit Medline Plus to learn more about treatment of multiple myeloma, the latest research and more from the National Institutes of Health.

VA benefits for multiple myeloma, Veterans with multiple myeloma who were exposed to herbicides during service may be eligible for disability compensation and health care. Veterans who served in Vietnam, the Korean demilitarized zone or another area where Agent Orange was sprayed may be eligible for a free Agent Orange registry health exam. Surviving spouses, dependent children and dependent parents of Veterans who were exposed to herbicides during military service and died as the result of multiple myeloma may be eligible for survivors' benefits.

Research on multiple myeloma and herbicides, The Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences concluded in its 1994 report on "Veterans and Agent Orange: Health Effects of Herbicides Used in Vietnam" and in 1996, 1998, 2002, and 2004 updates, that there is limited/suggestive evidence of an association between exposure to the herbicides used in Vietnam and the development of multiple myeloma.

View more research on health effects of Agent Orange. - See more at:

http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/conditions/multiple_myeloma.asp#sthash.qrcoQ1YB.dpuf (Source: Veterans Administration)

VA Expands Hepatitis C Drug Treatment: Expanded funding now allows VA to provide increased drug therapy at VA facilities nationwide. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has announced that it is now able to fund care for all Veterans with hepatitis C for Fiscal Year 2016 regardless of the stage of the patient's liver disease. The move follows increased funding from Congress along with reduced drug prices.

"We're honored to be able to expand treatment for Veterans who are afflicted with hepatitis C," says VA Under Secretary for Health Dr. David Shulkin. "To manage limited resources previously, we established treatment priority for the sickest patients. Additionally, if Veterans are currently waiting on an appointment for community care through the Choice Program, they can now turn to their local VA facility for this treatment or can elect to continue to receive treatment through the Choice Program."

VA has long led the country in screening for and treating hepatitis C. VA has treated over 76,000 Veterans infected with hepatitis C and approximately 60,000 have been cured. In addition, since the beginning of 2014, more than 42,000 patients have been treated with the new highly effective antivirals. In fiscal year 2015, VA allocated \$696 million for new hepatitis C drugs (17 percent of the VA's total pharmacy budget) and in fiscal year 2016, VA anticipates spending approximately \$1 billion on hepatitis C drugs. VA expects that with the expansion, many more Veterans will be started on hepatitis C treatment every week this fiscal year. (Continued next Page)

In addition to furnishing clinical care to Veterans with hepatitis C, VA Research continues to expand the knowledge base regarding the disease through scientific studies focused on effective care, screening, and healthcare delivery including to female Veterans and Veterans with complicated medical conditions in addition to hepatitis C. For additional information on Hepatitis C treatments Veterans can log onto <http://www.hepatitis.va.gov/patient/hcv/index.asp> . (Source: *Veterans Department*)

Veterans with Incomplete Health Care Applications Receive Additional Year to Enroll: The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has announced it will extend the healthcare enrollment application period for one year to approximately 545,000 living Veterans that have pending incomplete enrollment applications.

“Fixing the Veterans enrollment system is a top priority for VA. This is an important step forward to regain Veterans’ trust and improve access to care as we continue the MyVA Transformation,” said VA Deputy Secretary Sloan D. Gibson. “We’ve got a lot of work left to do, but this is a big step in the right direction to restore the data integrity of our enrollment system,” Gibson said.

The National Enrollment Improvement team conducted a detailed analysis of the pending applications in VA’s enrollment system and identified approximately 545,000 living Veterans whose applications were incomplete and in a pending status. The team also validated that approximately 288,000 pending enrollment system records were for deceased Veterans. VA has segregated deceased records from living Veteran records and, as part of the Veteran Enrollment Rework Project (VERP), will review each incomplete application to determine if any should have been enrolled in VA health care.

VA is required by law to provide notice to Veterans of incomplete applications. The VERP team could not verify that VA’s mailing system used to contact Veterans about their incomplete applications was able to notify the 545,000 Veterans identified above.

VA will contact living Veterans to confirm their continued interest in enrolling in VA health care and ask them for the necessary information to complete their application. Veterans will have one year from the notice to provide this information. After a year, VA will close the record. A Veteran may reapply for enrollment at any time.

As Veterans choose to enroll, VA offers an enhancement to their enrollment experience through “Welcome to VA” (W2VA). Veterans enrolled since July 1, 2015 have received a personal introduction to VA health care services, programs and resources to help them become more familiar with VA’s services. In addition, VA sends each new enrollee an introductory letter and personalized handbook in the mail. W2VA enhances communication by reaching out to newly enrolled Veterans through personal phone calls upon enrollment, providing assistance with health care inquiries and assisting with their initial appointment at their preferred VA healthcare facility. (Source *Department of Veterans Affairs*)

VA Announces Community Care Call Center to Help Veterans with Choice Program Billing Issues

Veterans can now work directly with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to resolve debt collection issues resulting from inappropriate or delayed Choice Program billing. In step with MyVA's efforts to modernize VA's customer-focused, Veteran-centered services capabilities, a Community Care Call Center has been set up for Veterans experiencing adverse credit reporting or debt collection resulting from inappropriately billed Choice Program claims. Veterans experiencing these problems can call 1-877-881-7618 for assistance. (Source: *Department of Veterans Affairs*)

Combat Veterans Get Telephonic Health Care Application: The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced today that it has amended its enrollment regulations to allow Veterans to complete applications for enrollment in VA health care by telephone without the need for a signed paper application. The change is effective immediately for Combat Veterans and will be effective July 5, 2016, for all Veterans.

This phased implementation accelerates VA's effort to enroll all Combat Veterans with pending applications as part of its ongoing Veterans Enrollment Rework Project. The VA is working to complete the review and rework of all pending health enrollment records for living and deceased Veterans this summer

By adding this telephone application option to VA's regulations, VA will now offer three ways to enroll. This change provides Veterans an even more convenient way to apply for enrollment, in addition to the paper VA Form 10-10 EZ and online enrollment application process. With publication in the Federal Register today, Combat Veterans may now apply by phone. All other Veterans may apply by phone starting on July 5, 2016.

When Veterans choose to enroll, VA offers an enhancement to their enrollment experience through "Welcome to VA" (W2VA). Veterans enrolled since July 1, 2015 have received a personal introduction to VA health care services, programs and resources to help them become more familiar with VA's services. In addition, VA sends each new enrollee an introductory letter and personalized handbook in the mail. W2VA enhances communication by reaching out to newly enrolled Veterans through personal phone calls upon enrollment, providing assistance with health care inquiries and assisting with their initial appointment at their preferred VA healthcare facility. For more information, Veterans can contact the Health Eligibility Center Enrollment and Eligibility Division toll free at 1-855-488-8440. *(Source: Department of Veterans Affairs)*

VA Partners with PGA to Support PGA HOPE Program for Veterans with Disabilities: The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is partnering with PGA REACH www.pgareach.com, the philanthropic arm of PGA of America, to bring a specialized golf program to disabled Veterans. The program, PGA HOPE – Helping Our Patriots Everywhere - is a therapeutic program to aid in the rehabilitation process for disabled Veterans.

The purpose of PGA HOPE is to help Veterans assimilate back into their communities through the social interaction the game of golf provides. Led by PGA professionals certified in golf instruction for Veterans with disabilities, Veterans will learn the rules of the game, and for those already familiar with it, the professionals will help them refine their skills.

PGA HOPE is a two-step program, beginning with an introductory, "Down Range Clinic." There are currently 50 programs across 20 PGA sections, enhancing the lives of more than 2,000 Veterans nationwide.

"As many Veterans struggle with the transition back into civilian life, the game of golf delivers camaraderie and a new level of enjoyment that provides them with hope," said PGA President Derek Sprague. "We are thrilled to collaborate with VA to offer PGA HOPE programming nationwide, as the PGA of America is committed to making a more meaningful impact on the lives of America's Veterans." For more information about VA's adaptive sports program, visit www.va.gov/adaptivesports/index.asp. For information about PGA REACH or the PGA HOPE program, visit <http://www.pgareach.com/>. *(Source: Department of Veterans Affairs)*

Good dental health and good overall health go hand in hand

With its emphasis on diagnostic and preventive care, the TRICARE Retiree Dental Program can help you avoid bigger problems down the road. Did you know that more than 120 different diseases are first detected in the mouth? And that going for your annual dental exams can actually help in detecting heart disease, diabetes, pancreatic cancer and more? In fact, swollen gums, mouth ulcers, dry mouth and excessive gum problems can often be signs of bigger health problems. The good news is that most dental diseases are actually preventable.

The TRICARE Retiree Dental Program (TRDP) was created and designed with this in mind. When seeing a network dentist, TRDP enrollees have the peace of mind of knowing that they get two annual exams, two cleanings (or three for Type 1/Type 2 diabetics) and an x-ray covered at 100%--with no out-of-pocket costs. This allows enrollees to recoup almost all of their annual premiums *and* ensures their dental and overall health is being well cared for. Here are some other reasons why more than 1.5 million current enrollees find the TRDP to be such a good value and an important partner in their health:

- As soon as your enrollment takes effect, you're covered for routine services, fillings, root canals, gum surgery, oral surgery and dental accidents. After 12 months of continuous enrollment, you'll get crowns, dentures, dental implants, braces and more.
- The TRDP offers a large nationwide network of dentists to help you save money on your covered dental care. To find a network dentist near you, use the "Find a Dentist" link at trdp.org.
- Network dentists have agreed to accept reduced fees for covered services—there are no surprise costs beyond the expected cost share and deductible, where applicable.
- Each enrollee gets a generous \$1,300 annual maximum, a \$1,200 annual dental accident maximum, and a \$1,750 lifetime maximum for braces.
- The TRDP coordinates benefits with other dental plans, allowing you to maximize your coverage under both plans and reduce or even eliminate your out-of-pocket dental costs.

Visit trdp.org to enroll, and choose the method that works best for you. Enroll online using the Quick Link to the Beneficiary Web Enrollment (BWE) site, or print an application from the TRDP website and mail it to Delta Dental along with the correct prepayment amount.

After enrolling, you're encouraged to register for the online Consumer Toolkit®, where you can verify your program eligibility; review your benefits, coverage levels, and remaining maximums and deductibles; check on the status of your processed claims and claim payments; and sign up for paperless (electronic) Explanation of Benefits statements.

Your oral health plays a big role in your overall well-being and quality of life. Enroll in the TRDP today—and enjoy regular, affordable dental care that's essential for your lifelong health and peace of mind. (Source TRDP.org)

Save your smile, your health and your money: Enroll in the TRICARE Retiree Dental Program

Do you see your dentist at least twice a year for regular checkups? If so, you have an excellent chance of keeping your teeth and gums healthy for a very long time. Because your mouth is the gateway to the rest of your body, maintaining good oral health is important—but even routine dental care can be costly, sometimes averaging several hundred dollars each year. Fortunately, the TRICARE Retiree Dental Program (TRDP) can keep you smiling *and* help you maintain your overall health, all at an affordable cost. (*Continued on the next page*)

Here are just some of the many reasons why more than 1.5 million current enrollees find the TRDP to be such a good value:

- You get your routine annual services—two cleanings (or *three* with diagnosed Type 1/Type 2 diabetes), two exams and an x-ray—with no cost share when you see a TRDP network dentist. And, these services don't count towards your annual maximum or deductible!
- Seeing a network dentist network helps you save an average of 22% on your covered dental care. With the TRDP, there is a large nationwide network of dentists from which to choose. To find a network dentist near you, use the "Find a Dentist" link at trdp.org.
- Network dentists accept the TRDP allowed fee for covered services, so there are no surprise costs beyond your expected cost share and deductible, where applicable.
- Each enrollee gets a generous \$1,300 annual maximum, a \$1,200 annual dental accident maximum and a \$1,750 lifetime orthodontic maximum.
- The TRDP coordinates benefits with other dental plans, allowing you to maximize your coverage under both plans.

To enroll in the TRDP, visit trdp.org and choose the method that works best for you. Enrolling online using the Quick Link to the Beneficiary Web Enrollment (BWE) site is quickest, or you can print an application from the TRDP website and mail it to Delta Dental along with your prepayment amount.

After enrolling, you're encouraged to register for the online Consumer Toolkit®, where you can verify your program eligibility; review your benefits, coverage levels and remaining maximums and deductibles; check on the status of your processed claims and claim payments; and sign up for paperless (electronic) Explanation of Benefits statements.

Don't wait to improve your oral health and your quality of life. Enroll in the TRDP today! (*Source; TRDP.org*)

2016 McChord RAO Heritage Dinner Canceled

Due to unforeseen circumstances the RAO has had to cancel the Annual McChord RAO Heritage Dinner for this year. We sincerely thank our volunteers for contributing so many hours to prepare for this dinner. Unfortunately, a lengthy reconstruction project at the McChord Club made the only facility available in the near future at North Fort Lewis. We were advised they would have to charge for many things previously provided in the meal cost. As a result, we voted to cancel this year's dinner."

We plan on resuming our Heritage Dinner tradition next year and for many years to come. In the meantime we are looking for new volunteers to help serve the McChord retiree community with information pertinent to the military retiree and with events such as the Heritage Dinner and the Annual Retiree Appreciation Day and Health Fair.

While we are working on next year's dinner we will be looking at ways to improve the experience, possibly by changing the format, theme or venue. Suggestions from our retiree community are welcome. (*Source: JBLM McChord RAO*)

**JOINT BASE LEWIS-MCCHORD (JBLM) RETIREE APPRECIATION DAY
REGISTRATION FORM**

3 JUNE 2016

(0730 – 1300 hours)

**American Lake Conference Center (ALCC)
JBLM-North**

Last year more than 2,500 retirees and spouses/family members participated in the Annual Retiree Appreciation Day and MAMC Health Fair. The information provided by the 52 Service Organizations was an extremely valuable reference pertaining to legislative changes for the Retiree Community. Please complete the information requested below and bring this form with you to the event. This registration form will also serve as your entry ticket to participate in the raffle which will make you eligible to win one of the Door Prizes donated by the Exchange (formerly AAFES). You will be expected to place your raffle ticket in one of the boxes at the registration table.

REGISTRATION DATA

Name _____ Telephone (____) _____

Street Address/PO Box _____ City _____

State _____ ZIP _____ E-mail _____

Army _____ Air Force _____ Navy _____ Marines _____ Coast Guard _____

Comments _____

_____ Cut along this line _____

RAFFLE STUB

(Must be present to win)

Name _____ Telephone (____) _____

Street Address/PO Box _____ City _____

State _____ ZIP _____ E-mail _____

Army _____ Air Force _____ Navy _____ Marines _____ Coast Guard _____

Comments _____