



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) Email – retaffairs@us.af.mil Web Site www.mcchordrao.com Retiree Activities Office: Open 0900-1200 Monday - Friday

VA Program of General Caregiver

Support Services As a Caregiver, the very best thing you can do for those who depend on you is to take care of yourself. VA offers a number of general support services to support Family Caregivers.

- VA Caregiver Support Line

https://www.caregiver.va.gov/Care_Caregivers.asp#VA%20Caregiver%20Support%20Line

- Peer Support Mentoring Program

https://www.caregiver.va.gov/Care_Caregivers.asp#Peer%20Support%20Mentoring%20Program

- Building Better Caregivers (free online workshop)

https://www.caregiver.va.gov/Care_Caregivers.asp#Building%20Better%20Caregivers

- Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers

https://www.caregiver.va.gov/Care_Caregivers.asp#Comprehensive%20Assistance%20for%20Family%20Caregivers

- REACH VA (work with a trained and certified REACH VA Program Coach)

https://www.caregiver.va.gov/Care_Caregivers.asp#REACH%20VA

Caregiver Support Line

Help is just a phone call away with VA's Caregiver Support Line https://www.caregiver.va.gov/help_landing.asp – 1-855-260-3274. Caring licensed professionals staffing the support line can connect you with VA services, a Caregiver Support Coordinator at your nearest VA medical center, or just listen if that's what you need right now.

Caregivers can participate in monthly telephone education groups, where they can discuss self-care tips and ask questions on a variety of topics. Want to learn more about the monthly calls? Access audio recordings of [Caregiver Support Line \(CSL\) monthly presentations](#). Review [CSL handouts](#).

Peer Support Mentoring Caregivers of Veterans are eligible to participate in the VA Caregiver Peer Support Mentoring Program, both as Mentors and as Mentees. Mentors and Mentees communicate using email, telephone, and letter writing depending on what works best for both of them. Mentors receive training before being paired with another Caregiver and are volunteers with their local VA medical center Voluntary Services Department. Caregivers participating in the Caregiver Peer Support Mentoring Program agree to participate for 6 months, but many participate for much longer.

Not sure if you are ready for this, but would like to try it out? VA also offers a one-time connection through the Compassionate Connections Program for those Caregivers who many need some brief support from an experienced Mentor but are not ready or able to commit to a longer-term mentoring relationship. To learn more, please contact your local [Caregiver Support Coordinator](#) (Source: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs)

VA video series teaches Veterans how to use new tool when filing disability claims online

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is transforming the way Veterans learn about and apply for benefits earned, through a new video tutorial completed in October highlighting the digital Disability Compensation Benefits Claims tool released earlier this year

<https://www.va.gov/disability/how-to-file-claim/>.

Built with Veterans, for Veterans, — an iterative development process that incorporates user testing and human-centered design principles — the tool is now available allowing Veterans with previously filed claims to have more control over submissions and represents an innovative leap forward in VA services

The accompanying five-part video tutorial series is accessible on VA's Office of Information and Technology (OIT) YouTube page

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dPuBrD-OniU&list=PLt_058CfeU2oqhqiIcbbYPgWPOY5fucl.

The tutorials describe steps Veterans can follow to complete disability compensation claims applications online using the new digital tool. The videos feature:

An overview of the online tool's user-friendly platform, and its efficient functionality that streamlines the claims submission process.

Log-in instructions for starting the process of filing a disability benefits claim, and how Veterans can track existing disability compensation claims.

Instructions on how the tool automatically checks the Veteran's record to find out if there is an active intent to file date already pending.

Visit the [full tutorial series](#) for instructions.

Click [here](#) for more information about disability compensation. *(Source: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs)*

VA's Board of Veterans' Appeals plans virtual hearings in 2020

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Board of Veterans' Appeals (Board) and Office of Information and Technology (OIT) are working towards nationwide availability of virtual hearings for Veterans next year, allowing access using their mobile phone or laptop via the [VA Video Connect](#) app. The virtual hearings are based on the [Veterans Health Administration's tele-health platform](#) and lets Veterans participate in their appeals hearings from the comfort of their homes.

The testing of virtual hearings began July 2019. The collaboration with OIT, Veteran Service Organizations and other Veteran representatives has been positive. To date, the Board has held 155 successful virtual hearings. Veterans who otherwise would have had to cancel their hearings were able to participate in virtual hearings and receive decisions.

[The Board of Veterans' Appeals \(Board\)](#) makes final decisions for VA regarding appeals for Veterans' benefits and services. The Board's mission is to conduct hearings and issue timely decisions for Veterans and other appellants in compliance with the law. *(Source: Department of Veterans Affairs)*

Veterans can now access information through Health Records on iPhone:

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has rolled out nationwide access for Veterans to their VA health data, alongside their health records from other health care providers in one place, in the [Health Records](#) section of the [Health app](#) for iPhone.

Patients will be able to see their medical information from various participating institutions,

including VA, organized into one view – covering allergies, conditions, immunizations, lab results, medications, procedures and vitals – and will receive notifications when their data is updated.

This capability was developed through VA's [Veterans Health Application Programming Interface \(Veterans Health API\)](#), first revealed in February, and has topped 2,000 users. The Veterans Health API allows private sector organizations to create and deploy innovative digital applications that help Veterans [access their health records](#) in new ways. Health Records data is encrypted and protected with the user's iPhone passcode, Touch ID, or Face ID.

Beyond this effort with Apple, VA plans to partner with other organizations to bring similar capabilities to other mobile platforms. (Source: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs)

Do Retirees need to sign up for Medicare Parts A and B if they are still working?

If you or your spouse have employer's health insurance you can delay enrolling in Medicare until your employment stops or your insurance coverage expires. When that happens you are entitled to a special period of enrollment, of up to eight months, to sign up for Medicare without incurring penalties. (Source: Medicare.gov (1-800-633-4227))

TriCare Fees to Rise

Tricare Select: Retirees who entered service before 2018 pay no enrollment fee, retirees who joined the service in 2018 or later will see an increase from \$462 to \$471 for individual coverage and \$924 to \$942 for family coverage. Some copayments will see slight increases as well. Active duty family members of those who entered before 2018 as well as all Tricare Reserve Select participants will see primary care visits go up by \$1 - from \$21 to \$22, specialist visits will increase \$2 each, from \$31 to

\$33. Those who entered in 2018 or later will see a \$1 increase in specialist visits.

Tricare Reserve Select Tricare Enrollment Fees and Copays: By law Tricare fees go up slightly every year. For retirees the cost bump is tied to the annual cost of living increase (COLA), other fee increases are set ahead of time by Congress.

Tricare Prime: The annual fee for retirees who entered the service before 2018 and their dependents will increase from \$297 annually to \$300 for individual coverage while family coverage will go from \$594 to \$600. For those retirees who entered the service after Jan. 1, 2018 the annual premium for individual coverage will go from \$360 to \$366 while the family plan will increase from \$720 to \$732. Some copayments will increase. Specialty and urgent care visits will cost \$1 more in 2020. Tricare Prime users who are medically retired or survivors do not see an increase.

Reservists enrolled in [Tricare Reserve Select](#) will see their monthly payments increase from \$42.83 to \$44.17 for individual coverage and from \$218.01 to \$228.27 for family coverage.

Tricare Retired Reserve: Retired reservists who haven't turned 60 and are covered under the [Tricare Retired Reserve](#) program will benefit from a rate decrease in 2020. The monthly premium for an individual retiree will decrease from \$451.51 to \$444.37, and those with family coverage will see a monthly decrease from \$1,083.40 to \$1,066.26.

Tricare Young Adult: College-age dependents enrolled in [Tricare Young Adult](#) will see an increase in their monthly premiums, the amounts vary depending on which option they are covered under. For Tricare Young Adult Select, the monthly payment will go from \$214 to \$228, and Tricare Young Adult Prime will see the monthly payment increase from \$358 to \$376.

Continued Health Care Benefit Program (CHCBP): Recently discharged members with temporary health insurance under the [Continued Health Care Benefit Program \(CHCBP\)](#) will see their premiums increase by the largest amount. Those who have single coverage will be hit with a premium increase from \$484.33 to \$517.67 each month, and those electing family coverage will pay an additional

\$75.67 each month, increasing their premiums from \$1,091 to \$1,166.67.

Tricare Pharmacy Costs: Prescription drug costs for Tricare users are also set to rise Jan. 1, some by as much as 42%. The pharmacy fee increases impact all Tricare users who utilize off-base pharmacies, including those on Tricare for Life. Effective Jan. 1, 2020, a 90-day supply of generic drugs received through the program's Express Scripts mail-order pharmacy will increase from \$7 to \$10. Co-pays on brand-name drugs received through the mail will go from \$24 to \$29; the price rises from \$53 to \$60 for non-formulary drugs.

Generic drug prescriptions filled at retail pharmacies will see the cost rise from \$11 to \$13 for a 30-day supply, while the same supply of brand-name medications will increase from \$28 to \$33. Non-formulary drugs -- those not on Tricare's list of fully covered medications -- will go up from \$53 to \$60. Prescriptions filled on base will continue to have no cost to members. (Source: *Tricare.gov*)

DFAS and Life Changing Events: Did you know that if you don't update your retired pay account in a timely manner, it could adversely impact your loved ones? Many issues can arise if DFAS is not notified of life-changing events, especially for your Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP).

Informing DFAS about life-changing events in a timely manner is one way to make sure your dependents are taken care of with the Survivor Benefit Plan. Promptly notifying DFAS ensures the correct premiums are billed and your loved ones will not face challenges in receiving their SBP annuity payments.

Below are examples of common life events and how deadlines impact your SBP coverage:

- At retirement, you're single with no children. After retirement, you marry or have a child. Notify us within **ONE YEAR** by sending us a DD Form 2656-6 and a copy of the marriage or birth certificate if you want SBP coverage.
- You divorce and elect former spouse coverage. Your former spouse passes away

and you later re-marry. Notify us within **ONE YEAR** of your re-marriage by sending us a DD Form 2656-6 and a copy of your new marriage certificate if you want SBP coverage for your new spouse.

Find out more about changing SBP coverage: <https://www.dfas.mil/retiredmilitary/provide/sbp/change> (Source: *DFAS Retired & Annuitant Pay*)

The National Resource Directory

(NRD) is a free service that links more than 14,000 resources to service members, Veterans and their families. The NRD was designed to specifically help those that are “wounded, ill and injured” find services that support recovery, rehabilitation, and community reintegration.

The site was created through a partnership between the Department of Veterans Affairs, Department of Defense and the Department of Labor. The NRD provides centralized access to resource information from the government (ranging from the federal to the local level). It also includes resources from non-profit, professional, educational and military-service/Veteran organizations.

All organizations are also vetted to ensure each resource is valid and accurate. (Source: VA News veteransaffairs@public.govdelivery.com)

2020 Cost of Living Adjustment 1.6%. The cost of living adjustment (COLA) increase applies to Social Security, Military Retiree pay and Disabled Veterans compensation.

The Medicare Part B premium is projected to go from \$135.50 per month to \$144.30 an increase of \$8.80.

HELPFULL LINKS

To find your state representative:

<http://www.house.gov/representatives/>

To find your state senators:

<http://www.senate.gov>

To find the VA:

<http://www.va.gov>

To find DFAS:

<http://www.dfas.mil>

To find Tricare:

<http://www.tricare.mil>

To schedule appointment to renew ID card

<https://rapids-appointments.dmdc.osd.mil>

Link to Retiree Publications

Army Echoes:

<http://soldierforlife.army.mil/retirement>

Navy Shift Colors:

www.shiftcolors.navy.mil

Air Force Afterburner:

<https://www.retirees.af.mil/Library/Afterburner/>

Marine Corps Semper Fidelis:

www.usmc-mccs.org

Coast Guard Evening Colors:

<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/cg1/psc/ras>

List of businesses who give military discounts

<http://www.rather-be-shopping.com/blog/2014/05/29/veteran-military-discounts/>

VA benefits book available

The Federal Benefits for Veterans, Dependents & Survivors handbook (2018 edition) is available. The book can be found at,

https://www.va.gov/opa/publications/benefits_book.asp

Veterans Crisis Hotline

1-800-273-8255 press 1

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Thank you for your support of the Hangar Flyer newsletter. If you have questions about anything pertaining to military retiree benefits and services, email us at; retaffairs@us.af.mil or call us at the RAO. Hours are 9 to 12 Monday through Friday. After 12 please leave a message and we will call you back. The phone number is (253)-982-3214

Thank you,

JBLM McCHORD FIELD

RETIREE ACTIVITIES OFFICE



Hangar Flying

Newsletter

Subscription Form

Please **print** all information clearly

NAME:

Last First MI

Email:

Please print the address as it appears on your email header. If you use **SPAM BLOCKERS** add us to your email address book. Please leave this completed form with the RAO volunteer on duty or you may mail it to 100 Joe Jackson Blvd, RAO, Customer Service Mall, Room 1001 JBLM McChord Field WA 98438

Be a Volunteer at the RAO

Hands on training will be provided and you will be working with a great team of volunteers who provide their time, skills, and talents towards helping the military community. For more information you can contact us at (253)-982-3214

USAF Retiree Activities Office Video

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4_NhlwXVjAA