



# Hangar Flying Newsletter 30 August 2021

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](mailto:retaffairs@us.af.mil) Web Site [www.mcchordrao.com](http://www.mcchordrao.com) Retiree Activities Office: Open 0900-1200 Monday - Friday

## FDA Announces Recall of Certain Sleep and Respiratory Devices

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has directed Philips Respironics to recall millions of sleep and respiratory devices following concerns that foam in the devices, used to reduce sound and vibration, may break into particles and enter the air hose of the device and be inhaled by the user. In response, the Military Health System (MHS) has notified all TRICARE-authorized durable medical equipment providers of the recall. And it's asking prescribing physicians to help notify patients of the recall and determine if they were issued a medical device on the Philips recall list.

The recall affects [certain medical devices](#) that were produced before April 26, 2021. They include:

- Philips Constant Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP) devices
- Bi-Level Airway Pressure (BiPAP) devices

The sound-reducing foam found in these medical devices may break into potentially harmful particles. These particles may enter the device's air hose and cause the user to inhale them. If that happens, the user could experience mild to severe symptoms. These symptoms could be an inflammatory response, headache, irritation in the eyes or nose, respiratory issues, or possible toxic effects. The FDA is closely monitoring reports of adverse health effects. To date, there have been a small number of symptomatic complaints. But there have been no reports of death as a result of these issues.

You should check the Philips website at <https://www.philipssrcupdate.expertinquiry.com/> or call 1-877-907-7508 to see if your device is on the recall list. If so, make sure you register your device on the patient portal. Philips Respironics is working towards a solution to replace or repair all affected BiPAP or CPAP devices, there could be

some time before you receive a new device. It's important to consider the risks / benefits of continued use of your current device while you wait. Be talk to your provider if you have any concerns about continuing use of your device. Your provider can determine if the benefit of using the device outweighs the risk outlined in the recall. If you continue to use your Philips device, you should clean it as described in the manufacturer's owner's manual.

Should you have more questions, contact the provider you received the device from. Go to the [FDA website](#) or [Philips Respironics website](#) to learn more. (Source: Tricare Communications)

## September is Suicide Prevention Month

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) works to raise awareness of Veteran suicide prevention and empower Veterans to connect with the resources they need now to prevent suicide later.

### About PTSD and Suicide

Going through trauma may increase a person's risk for suicide. Studies show that suicide risk may be higher in people who have PTSD. Find out more about the relationships between suicide, trauma and PTSD and on ways to help prevent suicide.

- Read about the relationship between trauma, [PTSD and suicide](#).
- Find out about [common reactions after trauma](#), that may include suicidal thoughts and behavior.
- Learn to recognize the [red flags](#) of emotional crisis

## Get Help: The Veterans Crisis Line

Whether Veterans are looking for clinical care, counseling, assistance with benefits, or something else, local and national tools and resources are available at the [Veterans Crisis Line website](#).

*The Veterans Crisis Line* is a free, confidential resource that connects Veterans or their loved ones to a real person specially trained to support Veterans.

Call **1-800-273-8255 and Press 1**, text to **838255**, or chat online at [VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat](#), 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

Veterans don't have to be enrolled in VA health care or registered with VA to use the Veterans Crisis Line. (Source: Veterans Administration)

## Annual eye exams essential to Veterans' vision and eye health

August is National Eye-Exam Month and the Department of Veterans Affairs encourages all Veterans to schedule their annual appointments. VA is highlighting routine eye exams particularly among senior Veterans. Age-related macular degeneration is the leading cause of vision loss in adults over the age of 60 — a common condition which can blur the sharp, central vision people need for activities like reading and driving.

A collaborative study led by the University of Virginia School of Medicine, and involving VA researchers discovered a group of HIV medications known as nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors may help prevent AMD.

Though hopeful, researchers say further studies and Food and Drug Administration approval will be needed before HIV medications identified in the study can be used to help treat age-related blindness.

Routine eye exams and preventive vision testing are covered under VA health care benefits. Click here <https://www.va.gov/find-locations/> to find the closest VAMC to schedule an eye appointment.

## American Forces Travel Privileges Extended to Eligible Veterans:

The Department of Defense has announced a policy change to the current shopping privileges on the American Forces Travel website <https://www.americanforcetravel.com> As directed by acting Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness Virginia S. Penrod in a memo signed April 12, 2021, the department will extend online access to the website to honorably discharged veterans of the uniformed services.

On average, customers save 35-40% compared to commercial travel pricing by using AFT. This includes discounted rates on hotels (up to 60%), airfare, rental cars, vacation packages, event tickets, and cruises.

The change will not affect access for existing patrons, and the increased customer base will allow AFT to negotiate better prices for its customers. AFT launched in 2019 as the only official joint service morale, welfare, and recreation leisure travel website exclusively for DOD patrons.

In addition to improving access to DOD's MWR benefits, every booking on American Forces Travel generates revenue to support critical quality-of-life programs for service members and families. To access the exclusive military discount pricing on travel products, visit the American Forces Travel website. Proof of eligibility is required. (Source: DoD)

**The Federal benefits Open Season** will run from **November 8 to December 13 2021**. Mark your calendars for the 2021 **Virtual Benefits Fair**. The annual event will be held throughout this year's Federal Benefits Open Season which runs from 8 November to 13 December 2021 for the 2022 season. The Virtual Benefits Fair is an online health fair that houses 2022 plan information in a single online location, enabling federal employees and military retirees to browse exhibits, view and download plan brochures, and connect with program representatives via chat. Last year, more than 43,000 people visited the fair.

Participants in this year's event include all of the Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Programs (FEDVIP) carriers, more than 20 Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program carriers, and representatives for both the Federal Long Term

Care Insurance Program (FLTCIP) and the Federal Flexible Spending Account Program (FSAFEDS). There will be four live chat days: **November 12, November 19, December 1, and December 8.** (Source: *Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program | BENEFEDS*)

## VA Expands Agent Orange

**Conditions:** The VA's list of presumptive conditions related to Agent Orange exposure <https://www.va.gov/disability/eligibility/hazardous-materials-exposure/agent-orange/> has expanded to include Parkinsonism, bladder cancer, and hypothyroidism. Previously denied herbicide exposure claims will be reexamined. If you're a Vietnam Veteran or an eligible survivor with health problems potentially caused by Agent Orange exposure during military service, you may be eligible for disability compensation. If the VA denied your claim for any of these conditions in the past, they will automatically review your case again. You don't need to file another claim. VA will send you a letter to let you know that they are reviewing your case. (Source: Veterans Administration)

## VA Updates for Specially Adapted

**Housing:** VA's Specially Adapted Housing (SAH) grant provides seriously disabled service members and Veterans with funds they can use to make modifications and adaptations to their homes. From ramps to handrails, these improvements can help you live independently. Learn more recent improvements to SAH grants at: <https://www.va.gov/housing-assistance/disability-housing-grants/> (Source: Veterans Administration)

## Express Scripts Mobile App

The Express Scripts mobile app can help you access your TRICARE pharmacy benefit and securely manage the medicine you take. The mobile app is free and can be found at the Apple App Store or the Google Play Store.

To get started, log in to the app with your TRICARE Express Scripts username and password. If you don't have an account, you can register for one. Once you've signed in on your phone, you can use the app to:

- **Order prescriptions**, view which prescriptions are due for refill or renewal,

and reorder them. If you have any questions, you can connect with a pharmacist 24/7.

- **Track orders**, you can track your current order's estimated ship date and then track the order in transit.
- **Set up automatic refills**, if your medications are eligible, you can set up and manage automatic refills through the app.
- **Pay bills**, you can make secure payments from the mobile app. It will show your current balance on your account, and provides several payment options and an option to set up automatic payments.
- **Manage medications**. You can set dose reminders that alert you to take your medication.
- **Move prescriptions to home delivery**. If you have an existing prescription at a military or retail network pharmacy, you may be able to request home delivery. You can see which medications are eligible for home delivery within the mobile app. you can get up to a 90-day supply of most medications mailed to you for the applicable copayment with free standard shipping with home delivery. You can also see if your medication is covered through home delivery by using the *TRICARE Formulary Search Tool*. <https://www.express-scripts.com/frontend/open-enrollment/tricare/fst/#/>

If you have questions about your pharmacy benefit or prescription costs, be sure to check out the TRICARE Pharmacy Program Handbook and TRICARE Costs and Fees Sheet. (Source TriCare)

**The RAO is in need of Volunteers**, if you are looking for a way to stay involved with the McChord Retiree community, volunteering at the RAO could be the answer. The RAO is staffed by volunteers, military retirees and spouses. Our sole purpose is to provide assistance to all military retirees and surviving spouses/family members with information related to their military service and/or earned benefits. Hands on training will be provided, and you will be working with a great team of volunteers, who are military retirees and spouses providing their time and knowledge in assisting our retiree community. Our hours are from 9 till noon

Monday thru Friday, for more information you can contact us at (253)-982-3214, leave a message after hours.

**Need to call the VA**, have questions, but don't know who you need to talk to, call the VA at phone number 1-800-MyVA411 (1-800-698-2411) their new one-stop call line.

## 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](http://www.shiftcolors.navy.mil)

*Air Force Afterburner:*  
[www.retirees.af.mil/afterburner](http://www.retirees.af.mil/afterburner)

*Marine Corps Semper Fidelis:*  
[www.manpower.usmc.mil/portal/page/portal/M\\_RA\\_HOME/MM/SR/RET\\_ACT/SemperFidelis](http://www.manpower.usmc.mil/portal/page/portal/M_RA_HOME/MM/SR/RET_ACT/SemperFidelis)

*Coast Guard Evening Colors:*  
<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/cg1/psc/ras>

**List of businesses who give military discounts** <https://militarybenefits.info/military-discounts/>

**Planning your Legacy a VA Survivors and Burial Benefits Kit**, the book can be found at:  
<https://www.benefits.va.gov/BENEFITS/docs/VASurvivorsKit.pdf>