



ODAG-VA Newsletter

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY ADJUTANT GENERAL – VETERANS AFFAIRS

September 2016

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Delaware Valley Veterans' Home:

www.dvvh.pa.gov

Gino J. Merli Veterans' Center:

www.gmvc.pa.gov

Hollidaysburg Veterans' Home:

www.hvh.pa.gov

Pennsylvania Soldiers' and Sailors' Home:

www.pssh.pa.gov

Southeastern Veterans' Center:

www.sevc.pa.gov

Southwestern Veterans' Center:

www.swvc.pa.gov

"The Pennsylvania Department of Military and Veterans Affairs does not endorse the organizations sponsoring events mentioned in this newsletter, and we do not endorse the views they express or the products/services they offer. The views and opinions expressed in any referenced document do not necessarily state or reflect those of DMVA. The information provided is intended for your general knowledge only, and serves solely as a DMVA community outreach effort."

Project Beacon Fall Retreat

Easter Seals, PA National Guard Child and Youth Program, and Penn State Extension Military Youth Programs are excited to offer an opportunity for the Project Beacon Fall Retreat for children of current service members and veterans. The Oct 21-23 Retreat will be filled with fun, consisting of group games, a climbing wall and zip line, arts and crafts, paddle boats, fishing, archery and of course bonfires! This camp is open to children with or without disabilities/special needs. Check in will be at 6pm on Friday and checkout will be at 1pm on Sunday. There will be 40 spots available for children of veterans (those eligible for a DD 214) and 20 spots available for children of currently serving service members not eligible for a DD 214 at this time.

If you have questions and to register contact Shane Gemmill at 717-741-3891 ext. 4 or vanderson@eastersealscentralpa.org.

Veteran ID Event

Montgomery County veterans and their families are invited to attend my joint Veteran ID event co-hosted by Senator Bob Mensch and Representative Justin Simmons on Friday, September 16, 2016 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at our Red Hill office located at 56 West Fourth Street, Floor 2, Red Hill, 18076. The office is located on the second floor of the Red Hill Borough building.

The event will feature:

- Montgomery County Recorder of Deeds Jeanne Sorg will be recording Veterans' discharges and issuing Veteran Photo ID cards that entitle Veterans to a discount at over 500 Montgomery County businesses. Veterans **must** bring their DD-214 papers (discharge papers) and photo identification to receive the discount card.
- Staff from US Senator Pat Toomey's office
- Staff from US Representative Ryan Costello's office
- Staff will also be available to assist with questions on state-related issues as well as to search the Unclaimed Property Bureau database to locate potential unclaimed property listings.

There is no registration for the event. If you have any questions, please call Senator Mensch's office at 215-541-2388 or Representative Justin Simmons' office at 215-679-3152.

Women Warriors Offers Free Course

Women Warriors explores the unique challenges and opportunities women in the military face and the impacts those experiences have on their bodies and brains. This course empowers students



to develop a growth mindset so they can build strong lives for themselves and those they love.

This 8-week course from UC San Francisco is free to all women military Veterans. It empowers women service members and Veterans with skills-based knowledge that can be used to increase resilience and create wellness after difficult life experiences. Upon completion of this course, Veterans will ultimately be able to modify their responses to stressful situations, both past and present, and form stronger healthier narratives for their futures.

To learn more: <http://womenwarriors.ucsf.edu/>

Article contributed by: Women Veterans of Berks County

Free Flu Shots

Now through March 31, 2017, all veterans enrolled in the VA health care system can receive free flu shots at any Walgreens or Duane Reade pharmacy. The joint outreach health initiative is designed to help serve veterans closer to where they reside.

Veterans must bring their VA identification cards with them, as well as another photo identification, and complete a short four-question application, which will be used to automatically update their VA electronic health records. No appointment is necessary.

Flu Clinics are also being offered by the Lebanon VA Medical Center at the following dates and times:

- Lebanon VAMC, Saturday, Sept. 24, 2016, 8 a.m. - 12 p.m.
- Lebanon VAMC, Tuesdays, Oct. 11, 18, and Nov. 1, 2016, 4 p.m. - 7 p.m.
- Berks County VA Clinic, Thursday, Oct. 13, 2016, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
- Berks County VA Clinic, Monday, Oct. 17, 2016, 9 a.m. - 7 p.m.
- Berks County VA Clinic, Saturday Oct. 29, 2016, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.



**KEEP
CALM
AND
GET YOUR
FLU SHOT**

Veterans Temporary Assistance

The purpose of this program is to provide temporary financial assistance to Veterans and their beneficiaries who reside in Pennsylvania for the necessities of life (food, dairy, shelter, fuel and clothing).

Eligibility:

- A person who served in the Armed Forces of the United States, who:
 - Was discharged under honorable conditions after a period of active duty, other than active duty for training, as evidenced by a DD Form 214 or other official documentation, or
 - Died in service or was killed in action, or
 - Suffered a service-connected disability as certified by the United States Veterans' Administration.
- Need for Assistance:
 - Financial circumstances temporarily resulting in insufficient funds to pay for shelter and necessities of living for the Veteran and family, when:
 - A Veteran is temporarily unable to provide the necessities of living and has a direct and immediate need for assistance. The assistance must be essential and not for the relief of an inconvenience, or the purchase of goods or services other than necessities of living, and,
 - Caused by temporary loss of income, assets or support due to sickness, disability, unemployment, natural or manmade disaster or other cause beyond the control of, and not as a result of, misconduct by the applicant or,
 - Caused by a temporary increase in costs or expenses beyond the control of, and not as a result of misconduct by, the applicant resulting in insufficient funds to pay for necessities of living.
 - They are eligible Veterans or unmarried surviving spouses of deceased eligible Veterans.
 - They are bona fide residents of Pennsylvania who permanently reside in this Commonwealth and who maintain a legal residence in no other state for any purpose.
 - They are not receiving sufficient monetary assistance from any state or federal agency based on the need for temporary assistance described in the application.
 - Applicants may be receiving food stamps and still qualify for temporary assistance under these guidelines.
 - Applicants must show that other funds or resources are not available to address the need for temporary assistance.
 - They demonstrate a clear and present direct and immediate need for temporary assistance in order to provide themselves and their families with shelter and the necessities of living.

If eligible, a Veteran or their beneficiary can qualify for an amount not to exceed \$1,600 in a twelve month period.

To apply contact the [County Veterans' Affairs Director](#) in the county you reside to apply for this program.

DMVA Hail And Farewell

We welcome Mr. Nate Porter, the newest employee to DMVA's Office of Veterans Affairs, Philadelphia Field Office. He comes to us as a Veteran's Services Officer. Mr. Porter brings a wealth of knowledge to the staff and is an Navy Veteran. He can be reached at nathaniel.porter@va.gov.

We welcome Mr. Allen Dick, to DMVA's Office of Veterans Affairs, Philadelphia Field Office. He comes to us as a Veteran's Services Officer from the VFW. Mr. Dick is an Air Force Veteran. Please give him a warm welcome. He can be reached at allen.dick@va.gov.

We look forward to great things from them. Please give them a warm welcome.

Outreach Team/Veterans Events Calendar Of Upcoming Events

Looking for available benefits, need help, or just want to talk to a Veterans Service Officer? Pennsylvania's Department of Military and Veterans Affairs Outreach team will be at the following events:



- 95th District Health and Wellness Fair**, Sept. 22, 2016, 9 a.m.-10 a.m., Reliance Café, 1413 West Market Street, West York, (York County) PA 17404 <http://www.pahouse.com/Schreiber/News/?id=78636> **POC: 717-848-9595**
- Philadelphia Regional Office Claims Clinic**, Sept. 24, 2016, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m., Philadelphia Regional Benefits Office, 5000 Wissahickon Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19144, <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/veterans-affairs-claims-clinic-and-outreach-fair-tickets-27302625889>
- March For The Fallen**, Sept. 24, 2016, 6 a.m. – 5 p.m., Strickler Field, Fort Indiantown Gap, Annville, (Lebanon County) PA 17003 <http://www.gapmwr.com/march-for-the-fallen> **POC: mftf@gaomwr.com**
- Juniata Fall Fest**, Sept. 24, 2016, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., Haldeman Park, East Main Street, Thompsontown, (Juniata County) PA 17094
- Veterans Family Fun Day**, Sept. 24, 2016, 9 a.m.-12 p.m., American Legion, 201 Carlisle Street, Hanover, (York County) PA 17331
- American Veterans Appreciation Day**, Sept. 24, 2016, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m., Seven Points Recreation Area, Raystown Lake Oak Shelter, Hesston, PA (Huntingdon County) 16647 <http://www.raystownlakecommunity.net> **POC: Bruce Cavanaugh 717-514-9118**
- Stand Down Pittsburgh**, Sept. 24, 2016, 8 a.m. – 3 p.m., Stage AE, 400 North Shore Drive, Pittsburgh, (Allegheny County) PA 15212 <http://www.vlpwpa.org/standdownpittsburgh16/> **POC: Stand Down Pittsburgh 412-481-8200 or StandDown@vlpwpa.org**
- Chestnuthill Township Community Day**, Sept. 25, 2016, 11 a.m.-5 p.m., Chestnuthill Park, 221 Route 715, Broadheadsville, (Monroe County) PA 18322 <https://www.facebook.com/Chestnuthill.Twp.PA.Community.Day> **POC: Chestnuthill Township 570-992-7247**
- Veterans On Broad Street/Hiring Our Heroes**, Sept. 26, 2016, 8 a.m.-2:30 p.m., 140 South Broad Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102 <https://www.uschamberfoundation.org/event/philadelphia-hiring-fair-0> **POC: Breanna Pleis, 215-587-5565 or activities@unionleague.org**
- Representative Costa's Senior Fair**, Sept. 29, 2016, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., 1000 Ross Municipal Drive, Pittsburgh, (Allegheny County) PA 15237
- Senator Brewster's Senior Wellness and Safety Expo**, Sept. 29, 2016, 10:30 a.m. – 1 p.m., The Palisades, 100 5th Avenue, McKeesport, (Allegheny County) PA 15132 **POC: Kathy Jo Osman, 412-664-5200**

For a complete schedule of our events visit: <http://www.dmvpa.gov/Pages/Events-Calendar.aspx>

Suicide Prevention Month

September is the start of [Suicide Prevention Month](#) and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is asking for the entire nation's help in reducing Veteran suicide. VA is calling on community leaders, supervisors, colleagues, friends, and family members to [BeThere](#) for Veterans and Service members starting with a simple act, which can play a pivotal role in preventing suicide.

"You don't have to be a trained professional to support someone who may be going through a difficult time," said Dr. Caitlin Thompson, Director of the VA Office of Suicide Prevention. "We want to let people know that things they do every day, like calling an old friend or checking in with a neighbor, are strong preventive factors for suicide because they help people feel less alone. That's what this campaign is about - encouraging people to be there for each other."

The campaign also highlights VA resources that are available to support Veterans and Service members who are coping with mental health challenges or are at risk for suicide, and it encourages everyone to share these resources with someone in their life.

"We hope our Suicide Prevention Month efforts help educate people about the VA and community resources available nationwide," said VA Under Secretary for Health David J. Shulkin, M.D. "We're committed to working with experts and organizations across the country to identify ways we can help Veterans and Servicemembers get the care they deserve and to expand the network of mental health support."

[Veteran suicide data](#) released by the VA Office of Suicide Prevention in early August 2016 serves as a foundation for informing and evaluating suicide prevention efforts inside the VA health care system and for developing life-saving collaborations with community-based health care partners.

VA plans to host a series of roundtable discussions with key stakeholder groups in the coming months as part of its plan to develop a public health strategy for preventing Veteran suicide. In August, VA hosted its first roundtable discussion, "Suicide Prevention is Everyone's Business," with corporate sector partners. In September, VA will host the [Veterans Affairs Suicide Prevention Innovations](#) event, which will bring together a community of experts from business, industry, academia, and government agencies to collaboratively identify solutions for reducing suicide rates among Veterans and Service members. In addition, new programs such as REACH VET are being launched nationwide in September to identify Veterans in VHA care who may be vulnerable, in order to provide the care they need before a crisis occurs.



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

VeteransCrisisLine.net/SpreadTheWord



**Let Veterans know
they're not alone. Share
to show your support.**



Events Throughout DMVA's State Veterans' Homes



Thanks to the Jewish War Veterans Auxiliary for giving residents at Gino J. Merli Veterans' Center in Scranton a spa day!

Thanks to City Charter High School Red Cross Club for taking residents from Southwestern Veterans' Center to the Pittsburgh Zoo!



Events Throughout DMVA's State Veterans' Homes



Thank you to Second Chance Wildlife Center, Wyoming County, for bringing some of your critters to DMVA's Gino J. Merli Veterans' Center in Scranton. The residents and staff enjoyed seeing the animals Second Chance is rehabilitating.



It's been a busy and fun summer at our Veterans' Homes and it's all due to the generous donations that have been received in the Resident Welfare Funds. We thank you on behalf of our residents and the staff. If you'd like to donate to any of the six Resident Welfare Funds check out our Online Donation site at www.donate.dmva.pa.gov.

I'm a Veteran.
I know what it's like.
Hear my story. ▶

MAKE THE CONNECTION
www.MakeTheConnection.net

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

VA Provides Service Dog Benefits To Veterans With Mental Health Disorders

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has announced today that it is piloting a protocol to implement veterinary health benefits for mobility service dogs approved for Veterans with a chronic impairment that substantially limits mobility associated with mental health disorders.

"We take our responsibility for the care and safety of Veterans very seriously," said VA Under Secretary for Health, Dr. David J. Shulkin. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is committed to providing appropriate, safe and effective, compassionate care to all Veterans. Implementing the veterinary health benefit for mobility service dogs approved for Veterans with a chronic impairment that substantially limits mobility associated with mental health disorders may prove to be significantly beneficial for some Veterans. The Service Dog Benefits Pilot will evaluate this premise."

VA has been providing veterinary benefits to Veterans diagnosed as having visual, hearing or substantial mobility impairments and whose rehabilitation and restorative care is clinically determined to be optimized through the assistance of a guide dog or service dog. With this pilot, this benefit is being provided to Veterans with a chronic impairment that substantially limits mobility associated with a mental health disorder for whom the service dog has been identified as the optimal way for the Veteran to manage the mobility impairment and live independently. Service dogs are distinguished from pets and comfort animals because they are specially trained to perform tasks or work for a specific individual with a disability who cannot perform the task or accomplish the work independently. To be eligible for the veterinary health benefit, the service dog must be trained by an organization accredited by Assistance Dogs International in accordance with VA regulations.

Currently, 652 Veterans with approved guide or service dogs receive the veterinary service benefit. This Pilot is anticipated to provide the veterinary service benefit to up to 100 additional Veterans with a chronic impairment that substantially limits mobility associated with a mental health disorder.

The VA veterinary service benefit includes comprehensive wellness and sick care (annual visits for preventive care, maintenance care, immunizations, dental cleanings, screenings, etc.), urgent/emergent care, prescription medications, and care for illnesses or disorders when treatment enables the dog to perform its duties in service to the Veteran.





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