

# Veterans Newsletter

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*4th Quarter 2021*

*October to December*

*Volume 46*



***County of Bergen***

*Department of Human Services*

***Division of Veterans Services***

*One Bergen County Plaza, 2nd Floor*

*Hackensack, NJ 07601*

*201-336-6325*

*[veterans@co.bergen.nj.us](mailto:veterans@co.bergen.nj.us)*



## A message from Bergen County Executive James J. Tedesco III



Veterans are an integral part of Bergen County and always will be. The COVID-19 pandemic has been an adjustment for everyone, especially our veterans, and we want you to know that the Division of Veteran Services is still here to serve those who have served our nation. The Division has compiled a list of Veteran Affairs resources for veterans and their families to get them through this difficult time, which can be referenced in this newsletter.

If you are a Veteran who has not applied for VA healthcare and/or who has seen your income change due to the crisis, then you can learn whether you qualify for VA healthcare by visiting the VA healthcare eligibility website or by calling 1-877-222-VETS (8387). You can submit an application to the local CBOC (Community Based Out-patient Clinic) in Hackensack, but please make sure you call ahead at 201-342-4536. If you want to put in for a disability claim, please call NJ DMAVA VSO, Mr. Joseph Restivo at 201-996-8050 or e-mail him at [Joseph.Restivo@dmava.nj.gov](mailto:Joseph.Restivo@dmava.nj.gov). Our Veterans are the reason why we enjoy the many freedoms we have today and that is why we will never stop working for you and your families while you serve and after you serve. We thank you for your service.

Should you know of any veterans in need of assistance, regardless of when they served or how long they served, please have them contact us at: (201) 336-6325 or email us at:

[veterans@co.bergen.nj.us](mailto:veterans@co.bergen.nj.us). We are here to help!

### **From the Bergen County Department of Human Services, Division of Veterans Services**

We want to express our sincere thanks to everyone in the Tedesco Administration for their continued support throughout these past five years.

The Bergen County Administration and the Department of Human Services' Division of Veterans Services will hold the "Remember Our Fallen Memorial" from October 28th to November 2nd in commemoration of the 20th anniversary of 9/11/2001. The Division of Veterans Services has helped with job placement, disability claim referrals, donations of items and services to improve the quality of life for veterans.

We received a lot of positive feedback from our efforts to end veteran homelessness. We thank our over fifty service providers who have provided services in homeless prevention, mental health, employment opportunities, and other important services aimed at improving the lives of our veterans who may be struggling.

Should you know of any veterans in need, regardless of when they served, or how long they served, please have them contact us at:

**(201) 336-6325** or email us at: [veterans@co.bergen.nj.us](mailto:veterans@co.bergen.nj.us) we're here to help.

We wish everyone a happy and healthy fall and winter.



Donations to the *Tracers* program are used to supply bus tickets to jobs, assist in preparing the veteran for employment, and to fill in gaps in the service delivery system.

Since our inception, more than \$135,000 in bus tickets were given to homeless veterans.

## **GOLD (\$500 and above)**

## **SILVER (\$250—\$499)**

## **BRONZE (\$100—\$249)**

Father Washington Post 1710

Our veterans are thankful for every item that they receive through the generosity of all the organizations in Bergen County. Donations always needed:

- \$10 food gift cards for McDonald's, Dunkin Donuts, Burger King, and other restaurant establishments.
- \$25-\$50 gift cards redeemable in stores such as Shop Rite, BJs, Target, Walmart, Walgreens, and CVS Pharmacy.
- New items including: carrying bags, sweatshirts (Medium to 2X-Large), jackets, underwear and socks may be dropped off weekdays between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.\* (call for coordination)

"TRACERS" assures that every penny donated is spent on items and services which help improve the lives of former members of the United States Military and their families who are now homeless or are in danger of becoming homeless.

*\*Parking is available. Pickup can be arranged for big donations such as food, clothing, and toiletries (if volunteers are available).*

We still need your help for more supplies. Please mail your check or call us for needed supplies at:

**Kindly make check payable to:**

***County of Bergen - Tracers***  
*Bergen County Division of Veterans Services*  
*One Bergen County Plaza, 2nd Floor*  
*Hackensack, NJ 07601*



**PSE&G**

*We make things work for you.*

**APPLICATION FOR SERVICE UNDER THE VETERANS' ORGANIZATION SERVICE SPECIAL PROVISION  
ESTABLISHED BY N.J.S.A. 48:2-21.41**

I hereby request that Public Service Electric and Gas Company (PSE&G) provide electric and/or gas service under the Veterans' Organization Service Special Provision at the following location:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Applicant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Service Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
Account Number – Enter 10 Digit Account Number Shown on Bill

\_\_\_\_\_  
Contact Number

\_\_\_\_\_  
Email Address

I certify that the location listed above is the primary location of the applicant. I further certify that applicant satisfies the requirements for this service set out in N.J.S.A. 48:2-21.41 because it is an organization dedicated to serving the needs of veterans of the armed forces and is one of the following: (1) chartered under federal law, (2) qualified as a tax exempt organization under section 501 of the federal Internal Revenue Code, or (3) organized as a nonprofit corporation under the New Jersey Nonprofit Corporation Act. As proof of eligibility, attached is one of the following: (1) the organization's Federal charter; (2) a State of New Jersey "Exempt Organization Certificate" Form ST-5; or (3) an Internal Revenue Service Determination Letter stating that the organization is exempt from Federal Income Tax under Section 501 (c) (19) of the Internal Revenue Code.

I understand that the submission of this application will not guarantee eligibility and that upon request by PSE&G, I shall furnish further satisfactory proof of eligibility for service under this Special Provision.

I understand that I must notify PSE&G if the primary use of the location is no longer related to the veterans' organization identified above. I understand that PSE&G may make inspections at any time to determine if the property is the location where the veteran's organization primarily operates.

I certify that all information given in the Application is correct and also that any accompanying documents are true copies.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature - Officer or Trustee of the Organization)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Return Application via email to  
LargeCustomerSupport@pseg.com  
or mail to:  
PSE&G Business Customer Solutions Support  
24 Brown Ave  
Springfield, NJ 07081

# Airborne hazards and open burn pit registry

AIRBORNE HAZARDS & OPEN  
BURN PIT REGISTRY



**WASHINGTON** — Did you know the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) collects, analyzes, and publishes data on health conditions that may be related to environmental exposures experienced during deployment? The Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry is a secure database of health information voluntarily provided by service members and veterans, and is instrumental in enabling the VA to improve care and services for veterans.

The registry consists of an online questionnaire followed by an optional, but recommended, medical evaluation. The questionnaire helps you document your deployments and exposures to airborne hazards (which include sand, dust, smoke from oil well fires, and more—not just burn pits) to create a snapshot of your health. Upon completing the questionnaire, you are encouraged to discuss your exposure history and health with a provider in a free, optional medical evaluation. Participants also receive information from the VA about registry updates and ongoing health studies.

Service members and veterans who were deployed in the Southwest Asia theater of operations on or after Aug. 2, 1990, or who were stationed in Afghanistan or Djibouti on or after Sept. 11, 2001, are eligible to sign up for the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry. These regions include the following countries, bodies of water, and airspace above these locations: • Afghanistan • Bahrain • Djibouti • Gulf of Aden • Gulf of Oman • Iraq • Kuwait • Oman • Qatar • Saudi Arabia • United Arab Emirates • Waters of the Arabian Sea, Persian Gulf, and Red Sea.

If you meet these eligibility criteria, please consider joining the registry to document your exposure and health information and support the health of other service members and veterans.

“In addition to encouraging eligible service members and veterans to register, we are working across the Military Health System and in collaboration with the VA to make it easier for health care providers to access patients’ environmental exposure data and assess their health concerns,” said Steve Jones, Force Readiness and Health Assurance Policy director and retired Army Environmental Science and Engineering Officer. “Through all these efforts, we’ll continue to collect critical data and gain a better understanding of how airborne hazards impact our troops’ short- and long-term health.”

Need more information? Check out [Health.mil/AHBurnPitRegistry](https://www.health.mil/AHBurnPitRegistry) for a brief informational video, frequently asked questions, and other helpful materials. Please note that the registry is completely voluntary. You do not need to be enrolled in VA health care to participate or to register.

For assistance or questions regarding the registry, please contact:

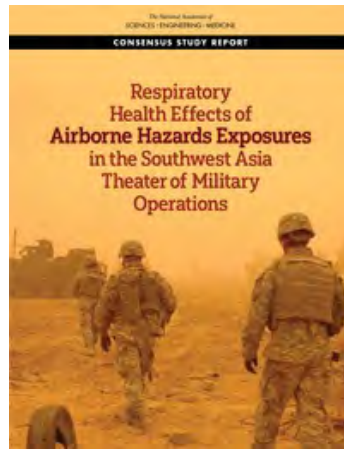
## Registry Help Desk

1-877-470-5947

8:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Eastern Time





## [Respiratory Health Effects of Airborne Hazards Exposures in the Southwest Asia Theater of Military Operations | National Academies](#)

Service Members who were deployed to the Persian Gulf region and Afghanistan (known as the Southwest Asia Theater of Operations) may have been exposed to airborne hazards from a variety of anthropogenic and environmental sources. There have been concerns that this population may be at increased risk of various respiratory illnesses, such as asthma and constrictive bronchiolitis. The Department of Veterans Affairs has tasked an NASEM committee to examine the scientific evidence regarding exposure to these hazards during their deployment to this theater and respiratory health outcomes. The study will additionally identify gaps in knowledge and recommend actions to address them.

### **The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. Consensus Study Report. (2020)**

More than 3.7 million U.S. service members have participated in operations taking place in the Southwest Asia Theater of Military Operations since 1990. These operations include the 1990-1991 Persian Gulf War, a post-war stabilization period spanning 1992 through September 2001, and the campaigns undertaken in the wake of the September 11, 2001, attacks. Deployment to Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Gulf of Aden, Gulf of Oman, Oman, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and Afghanistan exposed service members to a number of airborne hazards, including oil-well fire smoke, emissions from open burn pits, dust and sand suspended in the air, and exhaust from diesel vehicles. The effects of these were compounded by stressors like excessive heat and noise that are inevitable attributes of service in a combat environment.

*Respiratory Health Effects of Airborne Hazards Exposures in the Southwest Asia Theater of Military Operations* reviews the scientific evidence regarding respiratory health outcomes in veterans of the Southwest Asia conflicts and identifies research that could feasibly be conducted to address outstanding questions and generate answers, newly emerging technologies that could aid in these efforts, and organizations that the Veterans Administration might partner with to accomplish this work.

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<https://www.nationalacademies.org>

New Approaches Are Needed to Determine Whether Respiratory Health Problems Are Associated With Military Deployment to the Persian Gulf Region **News Release** | **September 11, 2020**

# VA Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit

## Quick Reference Sheet

VA



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

VA established the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit registry in 2014 to help us better understand the potential health effects of exposure to airborne hazards during military service. By joining the registry, you can provide information that supports ongoing research and helps VA provide better care to all Veterans.

**The registry includes two parts:** an online questionnaire and a free, optional environmental health evaluation. Keep this quick reference sheet handy to help you complete the questionnaire and schedule your exam.

### Before you get started:

- **Plan to spend up to an hour completing the questionnaire.** Depending on how many deployments you have, it could take more or less time to complete the questions.
- **Please complete the questionnaire for all your deployments, even if they were to the same countries or regions.** Even though some questions may seem repetitive, providing information specific to each deployment will give us a more complete understanding of your exposures and experiences.

### How to Complete the Questionnaire:

#### 1. Visit the secure registry portal.

You can access the portal at:

<https://veteran.mobilehealth.va.gov/AHBurnPitRegistry/>

#### 2. Use your Premium DS Logon Level 2 account to log in and check your eligibility.

If you already have a VA eBenefits or MyHealthVet premium account, you can use the same credentials for the registry.

### Registry Eligibility

You are eligible to participate in the registry if you served in Operations Desert Storm/Desert Shield (ODS), New Dawn (OND), or Iraqi Freedom/Enduring Freedom (OIF/OEF). This includes deployments to Southwest Asia after August 2, 1990 or Afghanistan or Djibouti on or after September 11, 2001.

#### We encourage you to join even if:

- You don't think you were exposed to specific airborne hazards.
- You are not experiencing symptoms or illnesses you think are related to your exposures.
- You have not filed a VA claim for compensation and benefits or applied for VA health care.
- You are still an active-duty service member or have returned to active service.

#### Learn more about eligibility at:

<http://www.publichealth.va.gov/airbornehazards>

If you need a DS Logon account, follow the directions on the registry portal page.

#### 3. Ensure your personal contact information is complete.

VA may use the email or mailing address you provide to share additional information about airborne hazard exposure or contact you to participate in related research studies.

#### 4. **Verify that all your deployments are listed.**

The registry will automatically pull your eligible deployment history from Department of Defense (DoD) records. If any of your deployments are missing, you can add them and submit for review.

Once VA reviews and approves your self-reported deployments, you will receive a notification via the contact information you provided. Reviews can take up to 30 days.

#### 5. **Complete the questionnaire.**

Answer the questions for each of your deployments. You do not need any documentation to complete the questionnaire, but you can refer to your records if you choose.

If you need assistance completing the questionnaire, a family member, friend, or caregiver can help you.

#### 6. **Save or print your responses for your records.**

When you have the finished questionnaire, make sure to save or print for your records. If you choose, you can submit a copy of your questionnaire to support your VA claim.

### **What if I don't see my eligible deployments?**

If you were deployed before 9/11, were a part of special forces, or were re-deployed within three months, you may get a notification in the registry portal that you do not have an eligible deployment. This is due to technical constraints and does not mean you are not eligible.

To continue completing the questionnaire, click the blue banner that says, "Request Eligibility Review", then follow the additional steps.

### **What if I need more time to finish the questionnaire?**

If you need to take a break, you can save your progress and come back later to complete it. When you are done, you can also log back in later to access your responses at any time.

## **When You Are Finished:**

### **Schedule your registry health evaluation at your convenience.**

Participating in the health evaluation is an opportunity to learn more about your own health, document your exposures, and talk to a VA health care provider about your health concerns. Even if you are not experiencing symptoms or illnesses you think are related to your exposures, the discussion can help you proactively monitor your own health. It is free, optional, and separate from both compensation and benefits evaluations and regular visits with your VA provider.

To schedule your evaluation, contact your local VA environmental health coordinator. There is no deadline to participate – you can schedule a visit any time after completing the registry.

You can find your facility's coordinator at: [www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/coordinators.asp](http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/coordinators.asp)

*Updated January 2021*



# TRICARE and Federal Benefits Open Season

**WASHINGTON** — Open Season is the annual period where you can enroll in, or make changes to, your healthcare plan for 2022. In 2021, TRICARE Open Season begins Nov. 8 and ends Dec. 13. Any enrollment changes you make will go into effect on Jan. 1, 2022. Open Season applies to anyone enrolled in or eligible for a TRICARE Prime option or TRICARE Select.

## Don't Forget!

If you're enrolled in a TRICARE health plan, you can enroll in a vision plan from the Federal Employee Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP). You can enroll in FEDVIP dental plan for dental insurance if you are eligible for a TRICARE health plan. FEDVIP offers many dental and vision plans with a wide range of benefits. To learn more, visit: [TRICARE Open Season | TRICARE](#)

## TRICARE East Region

Humana Military

1-800-444-5445

HumanaMilitary.com

[www.tricare-east.com](http://www.tricare-east.com)

## TRICARE Dental Program

United Concordia Companies, Inc.

1-844-653-4061 (CONUS)

1-844-653-4060 or 1-717-888- 7400 (OCONUS)

711 (TDD/TTY)

[www.uccitdp.com](http://www.uccitdp.com)

## TRICARE Plan Finder

[www.tricare.mil/planfinder](http://www.tricare.mil/planfinder)



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TRICARE Costs and Fees 2021

[Costs Sheet 2021.pdf](#)

## TRICARE Pharmacy Updates

### **Alert: Annual deductibles may apply to pharmacy**

Depending on your TRICARE plan and whether you're in Group A or B, you may have to meet your annual deductible before copayments or cost-shares apply for certain pharmacy types. To see if this applies to you, visit the TRICARE Compare Cost Tool at [www.tricare.mil/comparecosts](http://www.tricare.mil/comparecosts). Enter your plan, sponsor status, and select whether you're in Group A or B and then refer to the deductibles section in the chart.

### **Find out if your prescription is covered with the TRICARE formulary search tool**

How do you know if the prescription your doctor wrote for you is something that TRICARE covers? You can find out by looking it up on the TRICARE Formulary Search Tool at <https://www.express-scripts.com/frontend/open-enrollment/tricare/fst>.

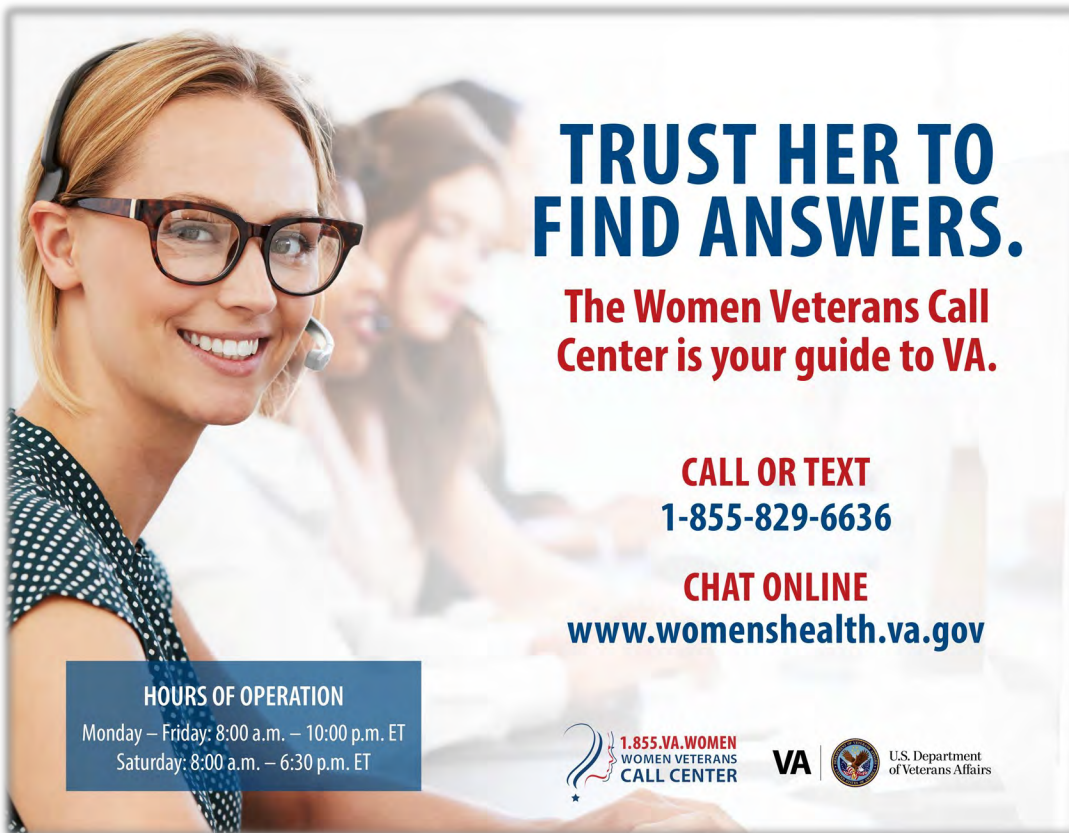
When you're ready to get started, visit the search tool and type in the brand or generic name and strength of the drug you need. Next, choose the age and gender of the person the prescription is for and click "Search." This will allow you to see:

- ◆ Coverage results and coverage rules, such as pre-authorization or other limitations
- ◆ Information about the drug and where it can be filled
- ◆ Other drug options
- ◆ Your copayment (if applicable)

### **Prescription home delivery with other health insurance**

If you have other health insurance and Express Scripts manages the prescription benefit, you can use home delivery through Express Scripts Pharmacy®. Your prescription benefits are automatically coordinated using both your primary insurance and TRICARE as your secondary insurance. For more information on coordinating your pharmacy benefits, visit [www.tricare.mil/CoveredServices/Pharmacy/Claims/OHI](http://www.tricare.mil/CoveredServices/Pharmacy/Claims/OHI). Please note that home delivery is not available in Germany.








**TRUST HER TO  
FIND ANSWERS.**

**The Women Veterans Call  
Center is your guide to VA.**

**CALL OR TEXT**  
**1-855-829-6636**

**CHAT ONLINE**  
**[www.womenshealth.va.gov](http://www.womenshealth.va.gov)**

**HOURS OF OPERATION**  
Monday – Friday: 8:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m. ET  
Saturday: 8:00 a.m. – 6:30 p.m. ET

As of September 20, 2019 there are 325,981 Veterans in NJ, of which 25,791 are women.

## She's your guide to VA.

All the representatives at the Women Veterans Call Center are women, and many are Veterans themselves. In addition to linking women Veterans to information, the Women Veterans Call Center makes direct referrals to Women Veteran Program Managers (WVPM) located at every VA medical center. The Women Veteran Program Manager helps the woman Veteran coordinate services.

### What will happen when I call the WVCC?

- ◆ You will be connected to a trained VA woman staff member.
- ◆ Call center staff will conduct a brief screening to assess your needs.
- ◆ Women Veterans will be provided personalized information regarding health care services, VA benefits and services, and a package of information will be sent to your home.
- ◆ You can call for yourself or for a women Veteran you know.
- ◆ The call is free and confidential.
- ◆ Contact information will be requested so staff may follow-up.

<https://www.womenshealth.va.gov/WOMENSHEALTH/ProgramOverview/wvcc.asp>

Women's Trauma Unit/ Military Sexual Coordinator

Phone: (908) 647-0180, extension: 1-5885

[www.mentalhealth.va.gov/msthome.asp](http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/msthome.asp)

DoD Safe Helpline (24/7)

(877) 995-5247

[www.safehelpline.org](http://www.safehelpline.org)



# CALLING ALL FEMALE VETERANS

## BI-MONTHLY FEMALE VETERANS PEER- TO-PEER SUPPORT GROUPS ON ZOOM!



Join our meetings online from the privacy of your own home to build a supportive network, gain resilience, harness strength and discuss women's topics all in a positive environment.

In person peer-to-peer support groups are on hold until further notice.

### Now is your chance to join virtually!

Contact Elizabeth Meyers at [emeyers@cfp-mnh.org](mailto:emeyers@cfp-mnh.org) for more information and to get the link to join!

*Now in its sixth year, Operation Sisterhood extends its deep appreciation for our generous supporters Healthcare Foundation of NJ, Merck, Bayer Healthcare and Craig Newmark Philanthropies*



# Health & Wellness Days at the VFW

Holy Name Medical Center and your local VFWs are partnering to provide health and wellness events in your community. All are welcome.

Weekly events will include:

- Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine\*
  - ↳ Register at [holyname.org/VaccineParamusVFW](https://holyname.org/VaccineParamusVFW)
- Blood pressure and other health screenings at no charge
- Health education
- "Ask a Nurse"
- "Ask a Pharmacist"

\*Those under 18 years old must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian. Vaccine is administered in two doses, three weeks apart. Please bring your insurance card. If you don't have insurance, you will still receive the vaccine at no cost to you. Identification will be requested but is not required.

## Special offer for veterans:

The VFW will be providing Veteran Services Officers to help qualified veterans apply for Veteran Administration disability benefits. Contact Kevin O'Hora via [K.O'Hora@NJVFW.com](mailto:K.O'Hora@NJVFW.com) to schedule an appointment.

### **PARAMUS VFW**

**6 Winslow Place, Paramus, NJ**

**Wednesdays starting July 21 | 2:30 - 5:30 PM**

# Veterans Healthcare Services

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION!

COVID-19 Vaccines Are Available for All Veterans in Need  
AT BERGEN NEW BRIDGE MEDICAL CENTER

The Pfizer, Moderna & J&J/Janssen vaccines are currently available at the Alternative Care Facility Annex at Bergen New Bridge Medical Center in Paramus

**Schedule at [BergenCovidVaccine.com](https://BergenCovidVaccine.com)**

**WALK-INS ACCEPTED/APPOINTMENTS PREFERRED**  
TUESDAY-THURSDAY FROM 7AM-2:30PM

Please be sure to bring **Proof of Age** (*driver's license/ID card, passport or birth certificate*)  
*Those 17 and under must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian*

Vaccinations are available at **NO COST\***

*\*No out of pocket cost or co-pay expenses*



NewBridgeHealth.org  
230 E. Ridgewood Ave., Paramus, NJ



# Veterans Healthcare Services

AT BERGEN NEW BRIDGE MEDICAL CENTER



**A Veterans Community Care Program**  
PARTICIPATING PROVIDER

**VETERANS ACCESS LINE**

**201-225-7189**

**Monday—Friday, 8:30 am to 5:30 pm**

**Bergen New Bridge offers Veterans a complete continuum of care, including:**

- Imaging and diagnostic services, including: state-of-the-art digital MRI, and lowest dosage mammography, allowing for safe and quick results
- Full-Service Laboratory
- Pharmacy
- Behavioral Health Services
- Long Term Care
- Substance Abuse Services
- Medical Detox
- Comprehensive outpatient care services featuring more than 26 medical specialties in addition to primary care
- Rehabilitation
- 24/7 Emergency Department

**All your healthcare needs under one roof.**

Access to convenient, local healthcare services are available to you at Bergen New Bridge. Just ask your primary care physician for a referral to Bergen New Bridge Medical Center. It is important to follow your benefits program requirements as specified in your plan when seeking services regarding referrals, authorization, and appointments

**All your healthcare needs under one roof.**

Bergen New Bridge Medical Center offers acute medical services, including 24/7 emergency department, surgical suites, physical rehabilitation, pharmacy, laboratory, radiology services (including digital mammography), and more than 26 medical specialties available through its Ambulatory Care Center. Learn more at [www.newbridgehealth.org](http://www.newbridgehealth.org).

Connect With Us





## Preparing Your Survivor

By **Patty Cruz**, Army Survivor Benefit Plan Program Manager

When you made the decision to provide the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) coverage for your loved one, you may or may not have discussed it with them. Whether you did or not, take the next step to have a conversation about how they will claim that benefit and what they might need after you die. It can be difficult, but not as difficult as it will be for your survivor to navigate without you.

Prepare a folder or binder (physical or electronic) that contains all the important documents that they will need when the time comes. Take a look at the following link to a useful checklist to start your folder/binder:

[https://soldierforlife.army.mil/Documents/static/Post/Retired\\_Soldier\\_Casualty\\_Assistance\\_Checklist.pdf](https://soldierforlife.army.mil/Documents/static/Post/Retired_Soldier_Casualty_Assistance_Checklist.pdf)

In the event of your death, your survivor will need to report your death to the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) to stop your retired pay to prevent overpayment. Your survivor can report your death using the ask DFAS online form or by calling the Customer Care Center at (800) 321-1080.

Once your death is reported, your survivor can then claim your Arrears of Pay and SBP annuity. Please see the link below for more detailed instructions on the DFAS website: <https://www.dfas.mil/RetiredMilitary/survivors/Retiree-Death/>

DFAS has some helpful tools to assist your survivor through this process to include a Form Wizard for the DD Form 2656–7 Verification for Survivor Annuity, the checklist of required forms, links to the required forms, and “How To” checklists and videos. The following webpage will provide more detailed instructions for the SBP annuity claim: <https://www.dfas.mil/RetiredMilitary/survivors/ApplySBP/>

Lastly, you should also let your survivor know that an Army Retirement Services Officer (RSO) is always available to assist. Contact information for the Army RSOs is located in this newsletter and on the following page: <https://soldierforlife.army.mil/Retirement/rso?maps=all>

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### How to report the death of a Retired Soldier

Contact the Department of the Army Casualty and Mortuary Affairs Operations Division anytime by calling (800) 626-3317. You will be immediately referred to a local Casualty Assistance Center, who will report the death to the Defense Finance and Accounting Service to stop retired pay and initiate the survivor benefits process. If you reside overseas and the toll free number is not available, call your Retirement Services Officer listed on page 15 for assistance. When reporting the death, please provide as much of the information below as you have:

- ◆ Full name • Disability Rating • Copy of death certificate
- ◆ Social security number and/or service number • Circumstances surrounding the death • Retirement date
- ◆ Date and place of birth • Next of Kin (NOK) information • Retired rank



## Tacoma Landlord Agrees to Pay \$16,618 for Overcharging Homeless Veteran Tenant and Fraudulently Obtaining Federal Funds

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Sunrhys, LLC, a landlord and property management company headquartered in Tacoma, Washington, agreed to pay \$16,618 to resolve allegations that it violated the False Claims Act by overcharging a tenant and by fraudulently obtaining federal funds from a federal program designed to provide housing to homeless Veterans.

The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and United States Department for Veterans Affairs (VA) jointly administer the HUD-VA Support Housing (HUD-VASH) program. HUD provides rental assistance for Veterans experiencing homelessness, while VA support services assist homeless veterans in identifying, obtaining, and maintaining housing and other needed support services. At the end of Fiscal Year 2020, approximately 80,000 formerly homeless Veterans were receiving permanent housing through the HUD-VASH program.

Between July 2019 and April 2020, Sunrhys was a participating landlord in the HUD-VASH program with respect to a Sunrhys rental property in Walla Walla, Washington that Sunrhys rented to Daniel Avila, an eligible Veteran. Each month, Sunrhys collected a portion of the monthly rent for the Walla Walla property from Mr. Avila. Sunrhys then submitted a claim for federal rent support funds for the remainder of the total agreed-upon rent. Pursuant to the Housing Assistance Payment Agreement governing Sunrhys' participation in the program, Sunrhys was expressly prohibited from seeking or collecting additional rent from Mr. Avila in excess of the eligible amount. The United States alleged that Sunrhys violated the Agreement and the HUD-VASH program requirements by fraudulently overcharging Mr. Avila for monthly rent between July 2019 and April 2020.

Jason Root, Special Agent in Charge at the VA Office of Inspector General, stated, "VA OIG's joint oversight of HUD-VASH is one of the agency's highest priorities because of the importance of safeguarding grant programs designed to end veteran homelessness. VA OIG thanks the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Washington and the HUD Office of General Counsel for their partnership and commitment to protecting at-risk homeless veterans."

"Under the False Claims Act, landlords that overcharge tenants under this program are liable not just to repay the amount that they overcharged their tenants, but for three times the total amount of federal funding that the landlord received in rent support payments plus additional penalties for each month, providing a powerful deterrent to fraud," added Acting U.S. Attorney Harrington. "I want to especially commend the exceptional investigative work performed by the VA's Office of Inspector General, Spokane Resident Agency, as well as the excellent work done by the Northwest Justice Project, which represented the whistleblower. Our office will continue to work together with our law enforcement partners, with whistleblowers, and with public interest groups like Northwest Justice Project to hold accountable landlords that abuse critical housing programs."

The settlement was the result of a joint investigation conducted by the VA Office of Inspector General and the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Washington, with support provided by HUD's Office of General Counsel, Office of Program Enforcement and HUD's Office of Inspector General. The investigation and prosecution for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Washington was handled by Assistant United States Attorneys Dan Fruchter and Tyler H.L. Tornabene. The claims resolved by the civil settlement are allegations only and there has been no determination of liability. The case is captioned *United States ex rel. Avila v. Sunrhys, LLC*, 4:21-cv-5013-TOR (E.D. Wash.).

For more information on the matter please visit:

<https://www.justice.gov/usao-edwa/pr/tacoma-landlord-agrees-pay-16618-overcharging-homeless-veteran-tenant-and-fraudulently>

# Congress wants answers on contamination at former US air base in Uzbekistan

Patricia Kime, Military Times

March 13, 2020

Several congressional committees are stepping up pressure on the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs to release documents about toxic pollution at a former Uzbek air base used by U.S. troops in the aftermath of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

The request follows demands from a bipartisan House Oversight and Reform Committee panel for complete military records on conditions at the installation, as well as the number and types of disability claims, injuries, illnesses, deaths and research on K2 veterans.

Citing studies that showed K2 veterans were five times more likely to develop some cancers than those who deployed elsewhere, as well as reports of chemical and radiation exposure, Luria said she is concerned that “VA has not acknowledged a relationship between serving on K-2 and diagnosis of cancers or death,” and that the Defense Department is ignoring the problem.

“The possibility that the Department of Defense knew that U.S. personnel deployed to K-2 would likely be exposed to dangerous chemicals and failed to advise them to take proper safeguards is deeply concerning,” Luria wrote.

The installation, a former Soviet and Uzbek military base, was used for logistics support for Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. DoD documents obtained by the news organization stated that the grounds of the base, also known as Camp Stronghold Freedom, were contaminated with missile propellant, solvents, fuel, lubricants, trace amounts of chemical weapons and depleted uranium.

For more information visit: <https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2020/03/13/congress-wants-answers-on-contamination-at-former-us-base-in-uzbekistan/>

*A U.S. Air Force C-130 Hercules cargo aircraft takes off for an Operation Enduring Freedom mission on a cloudy afternoon at Karshi-Khanabad Air Base, Uzbekistan on March 26, 2005, during Enduring Freedom operations.*



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For related stories see: **Post 9/11 veterans attribute deadly cancers to contaminants at US base in Uzbekistan**, <https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2020/02/27/post-911-veterans-attribute-deadly-cancers-to-contaminants-at-us-base-in-uzbekistan/>

**Groups join forces to fight military toxic exposure**, <https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2019/06/07/as-military-toxic-exposure-illnesses-mount-advocates-push-for-more-action/>

# Housing Information

## Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and Universal Service Fund (USF)

The LIHEAP is designed to help low-income families and individuals meet home heating and medically necessary cooling costs. To apply for LIHEAP for Bergen County:

### **Bergen County CAP**

241 Moore Street  
Hackensack, NJ 07601  
Phone: (201) 968-0200 extensions 7036/ 7049  
Fax: (201) 342-7452

## Transitional Housing Program for Homeless Veterans

### **Veteran's Haven North**

200 Sanatorium Road  
Glen Gardner, NJ 08826  
Phone: (908) 537-1999  
Toll Free: (877) 648-0091

## County Shelter and Emergency Housing

### **Center For Food Action**

(Emergency Rental Assistance)  
192 West Demarest Avenue  
Englewood, NJ 07631  
Phone: (201) 569-1804

### **Community Action Program**

**Drop-In Center/ Warner House/  
Ladder Project**  
67 Orchard Street  
Hackensack, NJ 07601  
**02, 07, 08, 09, 10**

### **Community Action Program**

**Family Shelter**  
40 Passaic Street  
Hackensack, NJ 07601  
**09, 10**

### **Bergen County CAP Family Service**

241 Moore Street  
Hackensack, NJ 07601  
Phone: (201) 489-2449  
**02, 08**

### **Family Promise of Bergen County**

479 Maitland Avenue  
Teaneck, NJ 07666  
Phone: (201) 833-8009  
**03, 04, 08, 10**

### **Mid-Bergen Community Mental Health Center**

610 Industrial Avenue  
Paramus, NJ 07652  
Phone: (201) 265-8200  
**04**

### **West Bergen Mental Health Care**

120 Chestnut Street  
Ridgewood, NJ 07450  
Phone: (201) 444-3550  
**04, 09, 10**

### **Spring House Bergen County Dept. Of Health Services**

327 East Ridgewood Avenue  
Paramus, NJ 07652  
Phone: (201) 261-3582  
**04**

## **Homeless Provider Directory Key**

1. Motel/ Hotel Referral
2. Single Shelter
3. Family Shelter
4. Transitional Housing
5. Domestic Violence Shelter
6. Runaway Youth Shelter
7. Drop In Day Center
8. Soup Kitchen/ Feeding Program
9. Job Training
10. Counseling

### **Salvation Army**

89 State Street  
Hackensack, NJ 07601  
Phone: (201) 342-6531  
**10**

### **Shelter Our Sisters**

406 State Street  
Hackensack, NJ 07601  
Phone: (201) 836-1075  
**03, 04, 05, 08, 09, 10**

### **Comprehensive Behavioral Health Care**

516 Valley Brook Avenue  
Lyndhurst, NJ 07071  
Phone: (201) 935-3322  
**01, 04**

### **Bergen County—Housing, Health, and Human Services Center**

120 S. River Street  
Hackensack, NJ 07601  
Phone: (201) 336-6475  
Fax: (201) 488-9298

# A Local Veterans Stand Down

Serving Homeless and At Risk Veterans

## Bergen County

The American Legion  
Post 170  
33 West Passaic St.  
Rochelle Park, NJ 07662



Saturday, October 2, 2021  
11:00 a.m. — 2:00 p.m.



### Services Include:

Benefits    Claims    Housings  
Men's & Women's Clothing    Lunch    Other Services

Questions or Comments—Please Contact

Dennis Duddie, Commander    (973) 842-5887    [dduddie74@gmail.com](mailto:dduddie74@gmail.com)  
Bob Looby    (908) 894-0746    [r.looby@njamericanlegion.org](mailto:r.looby@njamericanlegion.org)

# BERGEN NEW JERSEY *County*

**COUNTY OF BERGEN**  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
**DIVISION OF VETERANS SERVICES**  
One Bergen County Plaza • 2nd Floor • Hackensack, NJ 07601-7076  
(201) 336-6325 • FAX (201) 336-6327  
veterans@co.bergen.nj.us

## BERGEN COUNTY MILITARY SERVICE MEDAL APPLICATION

Name of Veteran	_____				
Address	_____				
City	_____	State	_____	Zip Code	_____
Branch of Service	_____				
Dates of Service	_____				
Type of Discharge	_____				
Signature	_____	Phone Number	_____		

**POSTHUMOUS AWARD**    YES    NO (If YES, complete the following and attach copy of Death Certificate)

Name of Person to Receive Award	_____				
Relationship to Deceased Veteran	_____				
Address	_____				
City	_____	State	_____	Zip Code	_____
Signature	_____	Phone Number	_____		

Check here if you want your medal to be mailed to you upon approval

## **BERGEN COUNTY MILITARY SERVICE MEDAL REQUIREMENTS**

- Veteran must currently reside in Bergen County.
- Veteran must have an Honorable Discharge.
- Application must be completed and submitted with a copy of the following:
  - If discharged prior to January 1, 1951, the following separation papers must be attached to the application:
    - U.S. Army: WSAGO 53-55
    - U.S. Navy & U.S. Coast Guard: NAVPERS 553
    - U.S. Marine Corps: NAVMC 790
  - If discharged after January 1, 1951, a copy of the DD 214 must be attached to the application.
  - Posthumous Medals will be awarded subject to the above requirements including a copy of a death certificate or obituary showing that the deceased veteran was a Bergen County resident at the time of his or her death.

**Return this form, along with required documentation by fax or mail:**

*Fax to:*  
201-336-6327

*Mail to:*  
Bergen County Division of Veterans Services  
One Bergen County Plaza, 2nd Floor  
Hackensack, NJ 07601

*Email:* [veterans@co.bergen.nj.us](mailto:veterans@co.bergen.nj.us)

**Questions? Call the Division of Veterans Services at 201-336-6325.**





## Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMAVA)

<https://www.nj.gov/military/>

### Veterans Memorial Homes

<https://www.nj.gov/military/veterans/memorial-homes/>

#### Paramus

##### Veterans Memorial Home

1 Veterans Drive  
Paramus, NJ 07652  
Main: (201) 634-8200  
Admissions: (201) 634-8435

#### Menlo Park

##### Veterans Memorial Home

132 Evergreen Road  
P.O. Box 3013  
Edison, NJ 078818  
Main: (732) 452-4100  
Admissions: (732) 452-4272

#### Vineland

##### Veterans Memorial Home

524 North West Boulevard  
Vineland, NJ 078360  
Main: (856) 405-4200  
Admissions: (856) 405-4261

## Introduction

The idea of a veterans home in the United States originated in the philanthropic mind of New Jersey Governor Marcus L. Ward, who had great concern for the sick and wounded soldiers of the Civil War. He believed that the commitment and obligation of the state and its citizens to those veterans did not end just because the war was over.

With the dedication of the New Jersey Soldiers' Home in Newark in 1866, a proud tradition began - a tradition of concern for and commitment to the veterans of New Jersey. Since that time, New Jersey has remained in the forefront in providing the finest in residential and skilled nursing care for our veterans and in responding and adapting to their changing health care needs.

## Facilities & Services

The Division of Veterans Healthcare Services operates three modern long-term care nursing homes located in Paramus, Menlo Park, and Vineland. These homes are inspected and licensed annually by the New Jersey Department Health and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Comprehensive services and a deep concern for the residents go hand-in-hand at New Jersey's three state-operated veterans nursing homes. Around-the-clock medical and nursing care is provided by a full-time staff of physicians, nurse practitioners, registered nurses, licensed practical nurses and certified nursing assistants.

Rehabilitative services, such as occupational and physical therapies, speech therapy, and recreational activities are provided under the supervision of contracted licensed therapists.

Resident accommodations are assigned based on level of care required and availability. In spacious dining rooms, residents are provided with wholesome meals prepared under the supervision of licensed dietitians. Tray service is available when necessary and special care is given to individually prescribed diets.

For the convenience and comfort of the residents, the homes feature fully equipped beauty and barber shops, lounges for socializing and watching television, outdoor patios and recreation areas, picnic grounds, and chapels for religious services for all faiths.

Recreational activities available include gardening, ceramics and other arts and crafts, cooking, bingo, shopping trips, music, art and pet therapy programs, movies, dinner trips, fishing excursions, billiards, and trips to sporting events.

# Senior Housing Update

Released : July 16, 2021

Media Contact: Derek Sands, [dsands@co.bergen.nj.us](mailto:dsands@co.bergen.nj.us)

## Bergen County Health Care Center To Close By End of 2021

The County of Bergen announced that the Bergen County Health Care Center (BCHCC) in Rockleigh will permanently close by end of 2021, citing a series of factors. The County will consolidate its inpatient health care services into one facility for residents by providing long-term care at the centrally located Bergen New Bridge Medical Center (Paramus) facility, which also provides immediate access to acute care services as well as pharmacy, diagnostic, hearing, and dental services.

For more information visit: [www.co.bergen.nj.us/health-care-center](http://www.co.bergen.nj.us/health-care-center)

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## New Jersey Veterans Memorial Homes

### **Menlo Park**

*132 Evergreen Road*

*P.O. Box 3013*

*Edison, NJ 08818-3013*

*Main Telephone: (732) 452-4100*

*Admissions Officer: (732) 452-4272*

<http://www.nj.gov/military/veterans/menloparkmh/index.html>

### **Paramus**

*1 Veterans Drive*

*Paramus, NJ 07652*

*Main Telephone: (201) 634-8200*

*Admissions Officer: (201) 634-8435*

<http://nj.gov/military/vetearns/paramusmh/index.html>

### **Vineland**

*524 North West Boulevard*

*Vineland, New Jersey 08360-2895*

*Main Telephone: (856) 405-4200*

*Admission Officer: (856) 405-4261*

<http://www.nj.gov/military/vetearns/vinelandmh/index.html>

The following documentations is required to establish basic eligibility of all applicants:

- DD Form 214 or other discharge form
- Birth Certificate
- Verification of marital status
- Verification of New Jersey residency
- Proof applicant has Medicare Part A and Part B
- Proof applicant has other health insurance (s) including supplemental health insurance
- Financial Eligibility (see application for details)
- Medical Information (see application for details)

For the application visit:

<https://www.nj.gov/military/veterans/memorial-homes/assets/documents/DMAVA-VHM-Application.pdf>



The Division of Veterans Services would like to take this opportunity to remind our veterans about **Division of Senior Services** another great resource. The **Division of Senior Services** is located on the 2nd floor of One Bergen County Plaza down the hall from our office.

Multi-lingual assistant is available

Walk-ins are welcome

Extended hours by appointment

**Bergen County Department  
of Human Services  
Division of  
SENIOR SERVICES**

***Aging & Disability  
Resource Connection***

One Bergen County Plaza  
Second Floor

Phone: (201) 336-7400

Fax: (201) 336-7430

The Division of Senior Services was established in 1968 under Federal Legislation of the Older Americans Act. It is the primary agency in Bergen County that plans and coordinates services for county residents age 60 and above, and their caregivers. The Division and its various committee advocate for those with the greatest economic and social needs. The Division also provides support to various community-based organizations that promote the well-being and independence of Bergen County's 200,000 older adults.

**ADRC Information & Assistance**

Bergen County ADRC provides information and assistance to older persons, adults with disabilities, caregivers, and professionals looking for services or programs.

Services we offer:

- **Information about programs and services**
- **Benefits counseling and referrals**
- **Assistance filling out forms and applying for benefits**
- **Medicare counseling including Medicare Savings Programs**
- **Access to publicly-funded long-term care programs**
- **Wellness Check program**

Resources we can help you find:

- **Financial assistance**
- **Aging-in-place and other long-term care options**
- **Housing information including home modifications and repairs**
- **Transportation**
- **Caregiver information and support**
- **Health, wellness, nutrition**
- **Legal, advocacy, and keeping adults safe**
- **Employment and volunteer opportunities**
- **Social activities**
- **Tax relief and services**
- **And more!**

To speak to an Aging Specialist call

(201) 336-7400 or visit our office.

**Meals on Wheels**

Eligible adults who are unable to shop and prepare their own meals, are provided with a mid-day meal delivered directly to their homes.

For information on eligibility and options available call (201) 336-7420. To apply online go to [www.co.bergen.nj.us](http://www.co.bergen.nj.us)

## Lunch Nutrition Program

Monday through Friday a well-balanced mid-day meal is served at senior centers located throughout Bergen County. The program fosters social interaction and educates participants through quarterly nutrition and wellness lectures. Transportation may be available.

## Senior Activity Centers

Bergen County operates ten Senior Activity Centers that are open for services to all Bergen County residents 60+ and their significant others regardless of age.

- Zumba
- Tai –Chi
- Choir
- Muscle training
- Yoga
- Spanish workshop
- Board games
- Arthritis exercise
- Dancing classes
- Chair exercise
- ESL classes
- Meditation
- Computer workshop
- Knitting & crocheting

### Locations:

Bergenfield · East Rutherford · Elmwood Park · Garfield - Hackensack · Midland Park · North Arlington · Palisades Park · Ridgefield Park · Wallington

Check your community center or town for senior activities. Eligibility criteria and fees may apply.



## HealthEASE

HealthEASE is an expansion of the ADRC, system designed to improve and sustain the health and wellness of age 60+ adults provided through:

- Health Education
- Health Screenings
- Senior Farmers' Market
- Senior Wellness Fairs
- Health Resources
- Nutrition Counseling

For more information call (201) 336-7403.

### Department of Human Services

Melissa H. DeBartolo, Esq.  
*Director*

### Division of Senior Services

Lorraine Joewono  
*Director*

## State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) Medicare Counseling

New Jersey state trained and certified counselors help Medicare beneficiaries and pre-enrollees understand their benefits, options, and entitlements.

For more information call (201) 336-7413,  
(201) 336-7427 or (201) 336-7400.

## Reverse Mortgage Counseling Home Equity Conversion Mortgage (HECM)

Certified counselors trained by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), advise seniors age 62 and over on way to access their home equity so they can remain at home and age-in place.

For more information call (201) 336-7569.



## About the Veterans Aid & Attendance Pension benefit:

In 1952, Congress passed Title 38 of the United States Code, creating what we now call the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), authorizing benefits for veterans. One of these benefits is the Non-Service Connected Pension, with "Aid & Attendance." (Veterans Aid & Attendance Pension benefit.)

Even though the pension has existed for 60 years, very few people know about it or understand how it works. Veterans Home Care has 18 years' experience successfully helping veteran families apply for and receive the pension. Let us help you, too.

### National Headquarters

11975 Westline Industrial Drive  
St. Louis, Missouri, 63146

**Free Consultation Referrals:** 1-888-314-6075

**Fax Referrals:** 1-800-640-7988

At Veterans Home Care, we're dedicated to helping veterans who have proudly served their country, or their surviving spouses, get the benefits they deserve.

- **We help you determine if you qualify for the VA Aid & Attendance Pension Benefit.**
- **We assist you to identify and obtain documents needed for the application.**
- **We help you complete and submit the application to the VA.**
- **We provide your home care right away.**
- **We furnish an interest-free loan so you can pay for your home care while the VA processes your application.**
- **We monitor your application's progress, and assist with responses to VA requests for additional information until your pension is approved.**

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## Eligibility

### Do You Have the "3-Ms"?

1. **Military:** Are you a veteran or the surviving spouse of a veteran who served at least 90 days on active duty, at least one day during wartime with an honorable or general discharge? (Persian Gulf War veterans must have two years of active duty or the full period of which they were called for active duty.)
2. **Medical:** Do you have a non service-connected medical condition causing you to need assistance with activities of daily living?
3. **Money:** Do you have a net worth at or less than \$130,773? (limit established by Congress 12.1.2020) A primary residence and auto are not counted as part of net worth. Ongoing non-reimbursable medical and long-term care expenses may reduce your countable income.

### Did you serve during one of the VA Defined War Periods?

- **World War II: Dec 7, 1941-Dec. 31, 1946**
- **Korean Conflict: June 27, 1950-Jan. 31, 1955**
- **Vietnam Era: Aug. 5, 1964-May 7, 1975 For veterans who served Feb. 28, 1961-Aug 5, 1964, must have served "in country" (Vietnam).**
- **Persian Gulf War: Aug 2, 1990- date to be prescribed by Presidential proclamation or law.**
- **Must have served active duty for two years or the full period of which the veteran was called for active duty.**

<https://veteranshomecare.com/>



**BERGEN NEW JERSEY**  
*County*

2021

## Remembering Our Fallen Memorial (Tribute Wall)

Wednesday, October 27th–  
Wednesday, November 3rd  
Overpeck Park  
The Amphitheatre



Please call **(201) 336-6325** or email [veterans@co.bergen.nj.us](mailto:veterans@co.bergen.nj.us)  
For more information or to request special accommodations

**James J. Tedesco III**  
*Bergen County Executive*

### **Board of Commissioners**

Steven A. Tanelli, Chairman • Tracy Silna Zur, Vice-Chairwoman

Dr. Joan M. Voss, Chair Pro Tempore

Mary J. Amoroso • Ramon Hache • Germaine M. Ortiz • Thomas J. Sullivan, Jr.



# ADVOCATING FOR OUR VETERANS IN

# *New Jersey*

**Coming soon**

Learn more at

[www.njsosvets.org](http://www.njsosvets.org)



**NEW JERSEY SOS VETERANS  
STAKEHOLDERS GROUP**

