

Vietnam Veterans of America
Chapter 788 Newsletter
January 2016

FEATURES

- ◆ *Veterans Choice Program*
- ◆ *Mighty Oaks Warrior Programs*
- ◆ *Agent Orange Resources*



The Greater Gallatin Homeless Action
Coalition Presents:

COMMUNITY CONNECT

January 30, 2016



Project Homeless Connect and *Vietnam Veterans of America Southwest Montana* will be partnering at the First Presbyterian Church in Bozeman on Saturday, January 30, 2016 to present Community Connect.

Community Connect will help connect consumers with services including:

- *Housing information*
- *Medical care*
- *Haircuts*
- *Dental care*

And a variety of social services that help lead to housing and self sufficiency.

**First Presbyterian Church
26 West Babcock
Bozeman, Montana**

9am to 2pm

Food Served All Day

No Appointment Necessary

VETERANS CHOICE PROGRAM



The Department of Veterans Affairs, under pressure to expand veterans' access to private doctors outside its understaffed medical system, have announced new rules to expand the number of patients who are eligible under the *Veterans Choice Program*.

The agency said its staff has now been given broader flexibility to determine if a veteran can be referred to a private clinic or doctor's office.

For example, if a patient faces an "undue burden" getting to treatment at a VA medical center, he or she can be referred outside the system. These burdens include geographic barriers, environmental factors, severe medical conditions or a need for frequent care, such as chemotherapy or tests that can be done quickly closer to home, officials said.

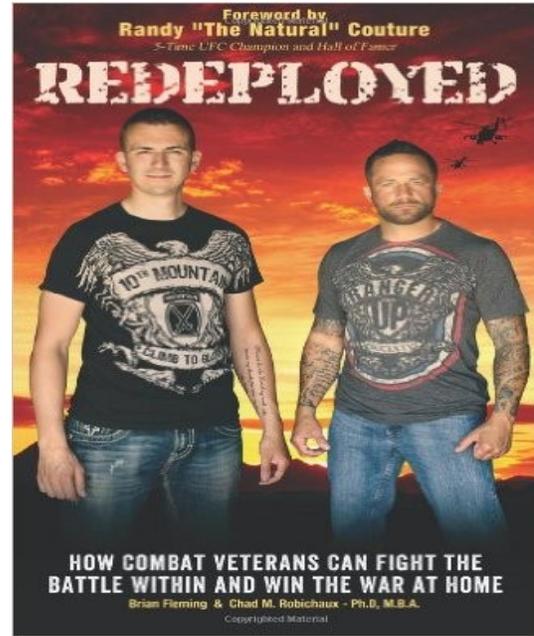
The changes, which are effective immediately, also include a tweak to the requirement that a veteran must live more than 40 miles from a VA medical center to be eligible for private care. If VA has no primary-care doctor on staff, a referral for private care is required. That change alone should open the program to about 160,000 more veterans, officials said. The new rules also allow referrals to private doctors for any veteran who must travel by air, boat or ferry to a VA facility.

But the system, funded with \$10 billion from Congress to help former troops struggling to obtain care at overwhelmed VA clinics, has been slow to enroll patients, beset by resistance from employees to make referrals and restrictive rules, officials have acknowledged. The rules have hampered veterans in states with no full-service VA medical centers from getting to private doctors, for example. Members of Congress have pressed for more relaxed rules.

"As we implement the Veterans Choice Program, we are learning from our stakeholders what works and what needs to be refined," VA Secretary Bob McDonald said in a statement. "It is our goal to do all that we can to remove barriers that separate veterans from the care they deserve."

Read More>

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/federal-eye/wp/2015/12/02/va-loosens-rules-for-referrals-to-private-doctors-in-effort-to-expand-access-to-care/>



MIGHTY OAKS WARRIOR PROGRAMS

To restore the brokenhearted through Christ, to build leaders of leaders to rise up from the ashes; they will be called Mighty Oaks of Righteousness.

Their mission is to operate on a standing commitment to reach the brokenhearted, with a specific calling to assist our nation's military Warriors and families find a new life purpose through a hope in Christ, after enduring hardship through their service to America.

The Mighty Oaks Warrior journey begins with an intensive peer-based program for men, women, and couples. Through instructional sessions, camaraderie, and team building activities, their programs teach Warriors to overcome the past experience and move forward into a life of purpose.

Learn More> <https://www.mightyoaksprograms.org/>

Redeployed: How Combat Veterans Can Fight the Battle Within and Win the War at Home

Combat-Infantry Sergeant and a Special Operations Force Recon Marine joined forces to equip and educate other returning combat-veterans on how to FIGHT and WIN the most common battles they face after returning home from war (PTSD, TBI, Depression, Anxiety, Isolation, Suicide, Divorce, etc).

Fleming and Robichaux's roles as Resiliency Trainers for the U.S. Military have taken them to bases and installations across the globe.

amazon.com

Resources

- Agent Orange Registry Health Exam for Veterans
<http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/benefits/registry-exam.asp>
- VHA Agent Orange Home Page
<http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange>
- Vietnam Veterans of America Home Page
<http://VVA.org>
- The VVA Self-Help Guide to Service-Connected Disability Compensation for Exposure to Agent Orange –
<http://www.vva.org/Guides/AgentOrangeGuide.pdf>



The VVA Self-Help Guide to Service-Connected Disability Compensation For Exposure To Agent Orange for Veterans and Their Families

Agent Orange is a highly toxic herbicide used by the U.S. military during the Vietnam War to defoliate hiding places used by the Viet Cong, rice paddies and fields that provided them with food, and to clear the perimeters of military bases to give service members a clear line of fire. Although colorless, it is known as “Agent Orange” because of an orange band painted on the drums used to store and transport it.

After years of advocacy led by VVA, Congress enacted into law the Agent Orange Act of 1991. This legislation empowered the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to declare certain maladies “presumptive” to exposure to Agent Orange/ dioxin and enable Vietnam veterans, as well as some veterans who served along the demilitarized zone in Korea in the late 1960s, to receive treatment and compensation for these health conditions. Service-connected benefits, however, also may be granted for other maladies not recognized as presumptive health conditions.

The purpose of the Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) guide is simple: to present information and describe the process in a user-friendly fashion for a Vietnam veteran or (surviving) family member to file a claim for service-connected disability compensation or death benefits with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for illnesses/diseases associated with exposure to Agent Orange and other related herbicides during military service.

Read More> <http://www.vva.org/Guides/AgentOrangeGuide.pdf>