

Amid Concerns About Blast Exposure, VA Launches New Outreach Campaign To Enroll Pennsylvania Veterans In Health Care

By VA

WASHINGTON — Today, VA is launching a new outreach campaign to encourage all eligible Veterans to enroll in VA health care – including approximately 27,748 unenrolled Pennsylvania Veterans who served in Vietnam, the Gulf War, Iraq, and Afghanistan. This campaign will include text messages and emails directly to Veterans, public service announcements, paid advertising, and events.

VA is launching this campaign after reports of concerns from Veterans about health issues – including mental health challenges and thoughts of suicide – potentially related to repeated blasts and head trauma (low-level artillery blasts, IEDs, missile launches, heavy fire, and more). Since the first reporting about these concerns, VA researchers have been urgently studying this matter to learn more about the potential health impacts of blast exposure on Veterans.

Veterans enrolled in VA can access specialty screenings and services to address any health issues related to blast exposure. Importantly, Veterans who served in Vietnam, the Gulf War, Iraq, and Afghanistan, and other specific locations are eligible for VA health care based on their deployments — they do not need to have any health conditions specifically associated with their service in order to be eligible for care.

While we continue to urgently conduct research into the impacts of blast exposure, VA and the entire Biden-Harris Administration encourage these Veterans – and all eligible Veterans – to apply for VA care today. Veterans who use VA health care have better health outcomes than non-enrolled Veterans, VA hospitals are dramatically outperforming non-VA hospitals, and VA health care is often more affordable than non-VA health care for Veterans. Additionally, 92% of Veteran patients currently report trusting VA outpatient health care – an all-time high.

Earlier this year, VA made all Veterans who were exposed to toxins and other hazards (and meet basic requirements) eligible to enroll directly in VA health care – years earlier than called for by the PACT Act. This included all Veterans who served in the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, Iraq, Afghanistan, the Global War on Terror, or any other combat zone after 9/11. Veterans who never deployed but were exposed to toxins or hazards while training or on active duty in the United States are also eligible to enroll. Additionally, Veterans who do not meet any of the above criteria can often still access VA health care by receiving VA disability benefits or based on income.

This new outreach effort is a part of the largest outreach campaign in VA history, which began when President Biden signed the PACT Act into law in 2022 and continues to this day. As a result of this campaign, more than 835,000 Veterans have enrolled in VA health care (a 37% increase over the previous period); more than 900,000 Veterans have upgraded their priority groups, making them eligible for health care with fewer copays (an all-time record); and more than 4.4 million Veterans and survivors have applied for disability compensation benefits (another all-time record). The campaign has been focused on bringing new Veterans to VA by sending millions of texts and emails, hosting thousands of events nationwide, launching new paid advertising campaigns, working with influencers and companies, and more.

Eligible Veterans can enroll today by visiting our website or calling 877-222-8387.



Annual Turkey Day Distribution

By Adrienne Fors

Mission of Love distributes food every week to 275 families in the Slate Belt but on November 26, the volunteers and Grand Central's team distributed turkeys and meal boxes to more than 320 families.

"It is a wonderful opportunity to support our community during this time of year and to help to ensure that families can celebrate the season with joy regardless of their financial situation," said Landfill Manager Joe Statile.

Over 30 volunteers prepared for the annual turkey day distribution.

"The volunteers who show up week to week to help the families in need are angels in disguise and because of their dedication, many families can sleep at night with a full belly and peach of mind. We are very fortunate to have such wonderful volunteers in this community," added Sr. Community Relations Specialist Adrienne Fors.

If you would like to support the Mission of Love Food Bank or volunteer, please contact Pastor Frank or visit their website at <https://s2.bl-1.com/h/dxrGxXhg?url=https://pentecostalchurch-missionoflove.org/mission-of-love-food-bank>

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