

The NCA Adjusted COVID Safety Precautions for Committal, Memorial Services



The VA's National Cemetery Administration (NCA) has updated their procedures and restrictions throughout the coronavirus (COVID) pandemic based on the CDC's recommendations and guidance. Recently, the NCA updated their restrictions on gathering sizes at committal and memorial services in VA national cemeteries.

The rule that previously placed a limit on the number of persons permitted to attend committal and memorial services in VA national cemeteries has been lifted. The NCA also announced they're adjusting its rules for visitors and staff members in accordance with the CDC's new recommendations – while at a national cemetery, fully vaccinated persons are no longer required to wear masks and physically

distance themselves.

The NCA is working to restore full operations in a safe manner. While the adaptations of these procedures were originally put in place to help prevent the spread of COVID, the NCA is continuing to operate within the CDC's most recent recommendations and are pleased families will no longer have to limit the number of people at a service or socially distance themselves if they are fully vaccinated.

For more information on the NCA's COVID safety protocols or how to proceed at a national cemetery if you are not fully vaccinated, please read the latest [NCA COVID-19 update](#).

To find a national cemetery near you, use the NCA's [interactive map](#) for location details and more. ★

VA Dependency and Indemnity Compensation Changed – Do You Qualify?

A new law has passed that expands the eligibility for a VA administered benefit called "Dependency and Indemnity Compensation," commonly known as VA DIC. The benefit is offered to qualifying survivors of a service member who died in the line of duty or of a Veteran who died from a service-related injury or illness.

[The PACT Act](#) is new legislation that has expanded the access for VA services, health care and benefits to Veterans exposed to toxic substances, such as burn pits, Agent Orange and other hazards while serving. Due to the passing of this law, there are now more periods of service and over 20 additional presumptive conditions that qualify for benefits, making it easier for many survivors of deceased service members to receive VA DIC.

As a survivor, if you previously filed a claim for VA DIC and it was denied based upon a condition that now qualifies under the new legislation, you can re-apply to collect benefits as far back as the date of your original application. If after your claim

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Your Health

Be Prepared: Choosing Between Urgent and Emergency Care

When Health Emergencies Hit, Knowing Before You Go Is Key!

Before urgent or emergency medical situations arise, it's a good idea to know the details of your VA care benefits. Making a plan ahead of time can ensure you have the information you need to access your benefits, reduce out-of-pocket costs when and where possible and help reduce panic in high-stress situations.

First, let's explore the difference between urgent and emergency care. It's important to note that eligibility and coverage may vary for each type of care.

Urgent care includes medical services provided for **not life-threatening injuries or illnesses** such as strep throat, pink eye, or influenza. Keep reading to learn more about in-network clinics and benefit requirements.

Emergency care consists of **hospital services** that are necessary to prevent serious impairment of health such as severe chest pain, seizures, uncontrollable bleeding, moderate-to-severe burns or any injury or symptom that is so severe that delaying immediate medical attention would be hazardous to life or health.

If you're in doubt about your

health condition or illness, as a Veteran, you should consider always seeking out a higher level of care, such as care from an emergency department. For more information on emergency medical care, please visit the [VA's Emergency Medical Care page](#).

Seeking Urgent Care – Eligibility & Finding a Provider

To access the **urgent care** benefits and services that the VA offers, follow the information below to help avoid a financial or medical crisis.

Eligibility

To be eligible for in-network **urgent care**, Veterans must:

- Be enrolled in the VA health care system **and**
- Have received care within the past 24 months through the VA or a community provider

Contact your local VA medical facility to check eligibility.

Find a Provider

To access urgent care benefits, you must go to an in-network urgent care provider. To find an in-network provider, you can:

- Contact your local VA medical facility, **or**
- Use the VA Facility Locator, **or**
- Call the Community Care Contact Center at 877-881-7618

Many VA and community provider locations have changed hours and services because of COVID, so calling before your visit can ensure you find the help you need.

Get Care

When you arrive at an in-network urgent care provider, you should:

- Bring a valid, government-issued photo ID **and**
- Verify the urgent care provider is included in the VA contracted network **and**
- Inform the location/provider you would like to use your VA urgent care benefits to receive care **and**
- Do **not** pay a copayment at the time of your urgent care visit

If you have difficulty receiving care or filling an urgent care prescription, or if you receive care from a provider that is not part of the VA contracted network, visit the [VA's Urgent Care page](#) for more information.

As eligible Veterans, you deserve access to medical care and having a plan on how to use your benefits when needed will help ensure a smooth experience. For more information on covered services, prescription medication, copayments and more visit the [VA's Urgent Care page](#) or call the Summit County VSC at 330-643-2830. ★



Urgent Care in Summit County

VA Urgent Care facilities in Summit County include:



UH Akron Urgent Care
(Accepts walk-ins or call for instructions)
145 West Ave. Suite 2
Tallmadge, OH 44278
(330) 633-7090



Concentra Urgent Care
(If experiencing flu-like symptoms, call first and wait in the car for someone to assist you)
1450 Firestone Pkwy.
Akron, OH 44301
(330) 724-5299



Volunteers Needed for Memorial Day

The Summit County VSC encourages you to join us on May 20 at 8 a.m. as we honor fallen Veterans by placing a flag on each gravesite at our county's cemeteries. Open to volunteers of all ages and donuts and lunch will be provided. Please [complete the volunteer form available on our website](#) or contact David Burden at (330) 643-7636 for more information. ★



Visit the National Veterans Memorial and Museum with the VSC!

We are taking a trip to the National Veterans Memorial and Museum in Columbus on Thursday, May 18, and invite you to join us! Admission is free for U.S. military Veterans, active-duty military and Gold Star Families. Donuts & lunch will be provided. If you're interested in attending this trip, please reserve a spot by Friday, May 12, by calling David Burden at (330) 643-7636. Seats are limited – first come, first serve. ★



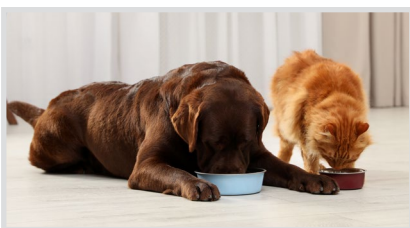
Mark Your Calendars for the Props and Pistons Festival Airshow

Looking for a family-friendly event this summer? The [Props and Pistons Festival](#) is August 19-20, 2023 at the Akron-Fulton Airport and has something for everybody. The festival includes an airshow, car show, live music, food trucks, and more. There will also be a Flight of the Flags Ceremony each day and a Veterans Remembrance Ceremony on Sunday. We hope to see you there! ★



Need a Ride? Call the VSC!

The VSC provides weekday transportation services to and from VA medical facilities as well as the Ohio Veterans Home in Sandusky, in a fully equipped van. Eligible veterans must schedule with the Summit County VSC at least 24 hours in advance to secure transportation. We do **not** provide any emergency transportation or transportation to the Wade Park VA Medical Center. Call 330-643-2830 for more information. ★



Free Pet Food for Veterans

The Summit County Animal Control Department gives out free dog and cat food to Veterans every Thursday from 1-3 p.m. Please visit the department at 250 Opportunity Pkwy in Akron or call 330-643-2845 for more information. ★

VA Dependency and Indemnity Compensation Changed – Do You Qualify?, from page 1

is re-evaluated and it is found that the VA owed benefits to the service member or Veteran that died, you may be eligible for a one-time accrued benefits payment.

The VA encourages all survivors who believe they may be eligible for [VA DIC](#) or believes their loved one passed away from a [PACT Act related condition](#) to apply now for benefits. You can file a claim online or by mail. As a surviving spouse or child you'll use [VA Form 21P-534EZ](#) to file a claim, and if you're a surviving parent you'll fill out [VA Form 21P-535](#) when submitting your application.

For more information or to inquire about applying for benefits, call the Summit County VSC at (330) 643-2830 or visit our office at 1060 E. Waterloo Rd. in Akron. We are your bridge to the VA and here to help you navigate and

maximize your benefits.

To learn more about the PACT Act and what it means for your VA DIC benefits, read more from VA News [here](#) or check out our previous EyesRight articles for information on The PACT Act, health services and VA benefits. ★

Health Care and Services for Veterans

Check out our recent articles on the PACT Act and health services that can help you navigate your care and benefits:

- [What Does the Passing of the New PACT Act Mean for Your VA Benefits and Care?](#)
- [Tips for Enrolling in VA Health Care](#)
- [Environmental Health Registry Evaluation for Veterans](#)

Presumptive Period Extended for Persian Gulf War Veterans

To ensure Veteran benefits are fairly administered to the more than 650,000 service members that served in Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm, the VA has extended the presumptive period to December 31, 2026 for Persian Gulf War Veterans.

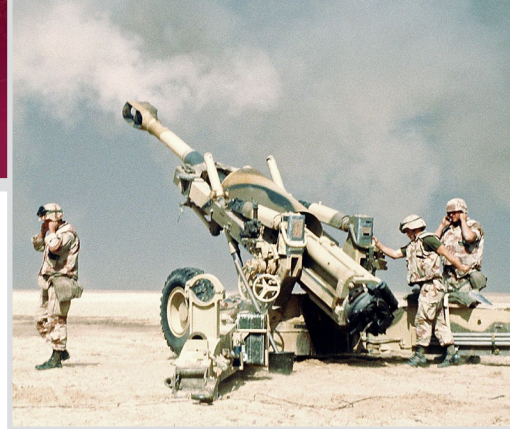
As current studies focusing on the cause and time of onset of illnesses suffered by Persian Gulf War Veterans remain inconclusive, the VA recognized that it would be premature to end the presumptive period on its initial end date, December 31, 2021. If an extension was not implemented, it would have substantially impacted service members who conditions manifested at a later date, limiting their entitlement to benefits due to the original presumptive period expiration.

Since the presumptive period has been extended to December 31, 2026, Persian Gulf War Veterans who experience symptoms that the VA presumes are related to Persian Gulf War service or any other unexplained medical issues are encouraged to file a compensation claim.

Some "presumed" illnesses and diseases include:

- Chronic fatigue syndrome
- Fibromyalgia
- Functional gastrointestinal disorders
- Abnormal weight loss
- Cardiovascular disease
- Neurological and psychological problems
- Skin conditions
- Respiratory disorders
- Sleep disturbances

As a Persian Gulf War Veteran, you may be eligible for a wide variety of benefits. Read VA News to learn more about the [extended presumptive period](#) or visit the VA website to learn more about benefits for [Gulf War Veterans](#). ★



Guitars for Vets Community Shoutout

The VSC of Summit County wants to thank the community for their donations to our Guitars for Vets (G4V) program. The [Taylor Band and Orchestra](#) recently donated music stands for our Vets and the [Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 900](#), generously donated \$1000 to be used towards new guitars and other

supplies for our program. Through these donations and community support we have had 17 Veterans graduate from our G4V chapter in less than a year.

If you're interested in joining or want to learn more, call Frank at 234-716-6796 or visit our [Facebook group](#). ★



Services for Vets

We provide financial assistance for basic living needs to eligible Veterans and their dependents.*

- Mortgage payments
- Rent
- Utilities
- Food
- Children's school clothing
- Adult work clothing
- Dentures, glasses and hearing aids

Free to Veterans!

- Regularly scheduled transportation for medical appointments at VA medical facilities and Ohio Veterans Home

* Other types of financial assistance may be considered on a case by case basis. All types of assistance are subject to change based on need and funding.

Veterans Affairs Assistance

- Assistance applying for Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits

If you are a Veteran in financial need or need help with your VA claim, please visit us at 1060 E. Waterloo Rd., Akron, OH, or call
(330) 643-2830.

- Preparation of VA forms and paperwork
- Supportive documentation of claims and pertinent data
- Proper submission of claims to the VA
- Service connected compensation
- Non-service pension
- Widows pension
- Burial benefits
- Headstones