

# Veterans Voice



\*\*\*PAPERLESS NEWSLETTERS\*\*\*

If you would like our newsletter sent to your email address please call our office & we will add you to our new email list.

## New Regulation Decreases Cost of Outpatient Medication Copay for Most Veterans



The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is amending its regulation on copayments for Veterans' outpatient medications for non-service connected conditions. VA currently charges non-exempt Veterans either \$8 or \$9 for each 30-day or less supply of outpatient medication, and under current regulations, a calculation based on the medication of the Medical Consumer Price Index (CPI-P) would be used to determine the copayment amount in future years.

"Switching to a tiered system continues to keep outpatient medication costs low for Veterans," said VA Under Secretary for Health Dr. David J. Shulkin. "Reducing their out-of-pocket costs encourages greater adherence to prescribed outpatient medications and reduces the risk of fragmented care that results when multiple pharmacies are used; another way that VA is providing better service to Veterans."

This new regulation eliminates the formula used to calculate future rate increases and establishes three classes of outpatient medications identified as Tier 1, Preferred Generics; Tier 2, Non-Preferred Generics including over-

the-counter medications; and Tier 3, Brand Name. Copayment amounts for each tier would be fixed and vary depending upon the class of outpatient medication in the tier.

These copayment amounts will be effective February 27, 2017:

\$5 for a 30-day or less supply - Tier 1 outpatient medication

\$8 for a 30-day or less supply - Tier 2 outpatient medication

\$11 for a 30-day or less supply - Tier 3 outpatient medication

These changes apply to Veterans without a service-connected condition, or Veterans with a disability rated less than 50 percent who are receiving outpatient treatment for a non-service connected condition, and whose annual income exceeds the limit set by law. Medication copayments do not apply to former Prisoners of War, catastrophically disabled Veterans, or those covered by other exceptions as set by law.

Copayments stop each calendar year for Veterans in [Priority Groups 2-8](#) once a \$700 cap is reached.

Please contact our office with any questions.

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### THE OFFICE

Hours:

Monday thru Friday

8:00am to 4:30pm

Closed Noon to 1pm for  
lunch

### Director

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### Department of Veterans Affairs Committee

John Nezworski, Chairman  
Vietnam

Douglas Banker  
Korea

Jeffery Lyall  
Vietnam

John Gallagher  
Korea

Donald Spinks  
Persian Gulf

## VA's Rule Establishes a Presumption of Service Connection for Diseases Associated with Exposure to Contaminants in the Water Supply at Camp Lejeune



The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has published regulations to establish presumptions for the service connection of eight diseases associated with exposure to contaminants in the water supply at Camp Lejeune, N.C.

The presumption of service connection applies to active duty, reserve and National Guard members who served at Camp Lejeune for a minimum of 30 days (cumulative) between August 1, 1953 and December 31, 1987, and are diagnosed with any of the following conditions:

- adult leukemia
- aplastic anemia and other myelodysplastic syndromes
- bladder cancer
- kidney cancer
- liver cancer
- multiple myeloma
- non-Hodgkin's lymphoma
- Parkinson's disease

Environmental health experts in VA's Technical Workgroup conducted comprehensive reviews of scientific evidence, which included analysis and research done by the Department of Health and Human Service's Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease

Registry (ATSDR), the Environmental Protection Agency, the International Agency for Research on Cancer, the National Toxicology Program, and the National Academies of Science.

Veterans with 30 or more cumulative days of active duty service, at Camp Lejeune during the contamination period are already eligible for certain medical benefits, following passage of the Honoring America's Veterans and Caring for Camp Lejeune Families Act of 2012.

In the early 1980s, volatile organic compounds, trichloroethylene (TCE), a metal degreaser, and perchloroethylene (PCE), a dry cleaning agent, as well as benzene and vinyl chloride, were discovered in two on-base water supply systems at Camp Lejeune. The contaminated wells supplying the water systems were shut down in February 1985.

The area included in this presumption is all of Camp Lejeune and MCAS New River, including satellite camps and housing areas.

The rule will be effective either 60 days after publication in the Federal Register, or following conclusion of the 60-day Congressional Review, whichever is later.

Please contact our office at 810-648-0212 with any questions or to set up an appointment.

## 2017 Donation Drive



Sanilac County Department of Veterans Affairs has once again teamed up with Croswell American Legion, Sandusky VFW, Sandusky American Legion, Sandusky District Library and Peck American Legion for an annual donation drive for veterans who are hospitalized in VA Medical Centers and homeless veterans. The drive will be the whole month of February. Suggestions: personal care items, crossword puzzle books, stamps, hairbrushes, lap robes, music CDs, finger/toe nail clippers, tennis shoes, sweatshirts & sweatpants, laundry detergent, phone cards and monetary donations. Items must be new and

can be dropped off during regular business hours at Sanilac County Veterans Affairs, 171 Dawson Street, Suite 227, Sandusky; Croswell American Legion, 97 W. Harrington, Croswell (Wednesday-Saturdays from 3:00pm-10:00pm); Sandusky VFW/Sandusky American Legion, 850 S. Sandusky Rd, Sandusky (Wednesdays from 8:00am-10:00am); Sandusky District Library, 55 E. Sanilac Avenue; or Peck American Legion Pines, 5894 Cass Road, Peck.

Any questions, call Shannon Kreger at (810) 648-0212 or Marleen Reynolds at (810) 679-8122.

# Flying the American Flag at Half Staff

## *When should the flag be flown at half-staff?*



An easy way to remember when to fly the United States flag at half-staff is to consider when the whole nation is in mourning. These periods of mourning are proclaimed either by the president of the United States, for national remembrance, or the governor of a state or territory, for local remembrance, in the event of a death of a member or former member of the federal, state or territorial government or judiciary. The heads of departments and agencies of the federal government may also order that the flag be flown at half-staff on buildings, grounds and naval vessels under their jurisdiction.

On Memorial Day the flag should be flown at half-staff from sunrise until noon only, then raised briskly to the top of the staff until sunset, in honor of the nation's battle heroes.

In the early days of our country, no regulations existed for flying the flag at half-staff and, as a result, there were many conflicting policies. But on March 1, 1954, President Dwight Eisenhower issued a proclamation on the proper times.

The flag should fly at half-staff for 30 days at all federal buildings, grounds, and naval vessels throughout the United States and its territories and possessions after the death of the president or a former president. It is to fly 10 days at half-staff after the death of the vice president, the chief justice or a retired chief justice of the United States Supreme Court, or the speaker of the House of

Representatives. For an associate justice of the Supreme Court, a member of the Cabinet, a former vice president, the president pro tempore of the Senate, the majority leader of the Senate, the minority leader of the Senate, the majority leader of the House of Representatives, or the minority leader of the House of Representatives the flag is to be displayed at half-staff from the day of death until interment.

The flag is to be flown at half-staff at all federal buildings, grounds and naval vessels in the Washington, D.C., area on the day and day after the death of a United States senator, representative, territorial delegate, or the resident commissioner from the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. It should also be flown at half-staff on all federal facilities in the state, congressional district, territory, or commonwealth of these officials.

Upon the death of the governor of a state, territory or possession, the flag should be flown at half-staff on all federal facilities in that governor's state, territory or possession from the day of death until interment.

The president may order the flag to be flown at half-staff to mark the death of other officials, former officials, or foreign dignitaries. In addition to these occasions, the president may order half-staff display of the flag after other tragic events.

The flag should be briskly run up to the top of the staff before being lowered slowly to the half-staff position.



*Thank you for the millage!*

## Transportation Program



Our office provides dependable transportation to and from VA appointments:

- Saginaw
- Detroit
- Ann Arbor
- Battle Creek
- Choice Program Appointments—NEW

- Limited transportation is also available to the VA outpatient clinics in Bad Axe and Yale

We prefer to be contacted as soon as you are aware of your upcoming appointment so we are easily able to accommodate your transportation needs.

If you are interested in getting a ride for your VA appointment please call our office at (810) 648-0212 to schedule that ride.