

Veterans Voice



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THE OFFICE

Hours:

Monday thru Friday

8:00am to 4:30pm

Closed Noon to 1pm for
lunch

Director

Shannon Kreger

Secretary

Katie L. Creguer

Contact us!

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Our paper version is back.....but if you would like your newsletter sent to your email instead please contact our office to provide your email address!

VA Selects Providers for Dental Insurance Program

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced that it has selected Delta Dental of California and MetLife to once again offer private dental insurance plans as part of the VA Dental Insurance Program (VADIP).

The program was extended until Dec. 31, 2021, by the VA Dental Insurance Reauthorization Act of 2016.

“It is important to provide this care to eligible Veterans, especially those who need lower-cost insurance,” said VA Secretary Dr. David J. Shulkin. “VADIP underscores our commitment to support America’s Veterans and their family members.”

Veterans enrolled in the VA health-care system and beneficiaries of the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the VA (CHAMPVA) can enroll in the program beginning Nov. 15, 2017, for coverage to start Dec. 1, 2017.

VADIP offers eligible individuals the opportunity to purchase discounted dental insurance coverage, including diagnostic services, preventive services, endodontic

and other restorative services, surgical services and emergency services.

Individuals who enroll in one of the dental insurance plans will pay the entire premium in addition to the full cost of any copayments. Enrollment is voluntary and does not affect eligibility for VA outpatient dental services and treatment.

The plans are available to eligible individuals in the United States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Delta Dental and MetLife previously offered insurance plans as part of the three-year VADIP pilot program. Coverage under the VADIP pilot began Jan. 1, 2013, and more than 115,000 Veterans and CHAMPVA beneficiaries enrolled in the program before it expired in January 2017. Individuals who enrolled in a plan during the pilot period must select and enroll in one of the new plans offered by Delta Dental or MetLife. While the insurance providers will remain the same, plan options, fees and other factors may have changed from those offered during the pilot.

***Please remember the importance of notifying the VA of a change of address even if you have direct deposit set up!**

***Notifying our office to keep our records updated is appreciated also.**

Department of Veterans Affairs Committee

John Nezworski, Chairman

Douglas Banker

Jeffery Lyall

Donald Spinks

Donald Rudy

Voyle Bissett

Donald Maury

VA Eliminated Net Worth as Veteran Health Care Eligibility Factor

The Department of Veterans Affairs has updated the way it determines eligibility for VA health care, a change that has resulted in more Veterans having access to the health care benefits they've earned and deserve.

Effective in 2015, VA eliminated the use of net worth as a determining factor for both health care programs and co-payment responsibilities. This change has made VA health care benefits more accessible to lower-income Veterans and brings VA policies in line with the MyVA initiative which reorients VA around Veterans' needs.

Instead of combining the sum of Veterans' income with their assets to determine eligibility for medical care and co-payment obligations, VA will now only consider

a Veterans' gross household income and deductible expenses from the previous year. Elimination of the consideration of net worth for VA health care enrollment means that certain lower-income, non-service-connected Veterans will have less out-of-pocket costs. Over a 5-year period, it is estimated that 190,000 Veterans will become eligible for reduced costs of their health care services.

If you have applied for VA medical Center benefits in the past and were denied because your assets were too high you may be eligible now. Please call the office at 810-648-0212 for more information or stop in to see us at 171 Dawson Street, Suite 227, Sandusky.

Weekly Therapy Group for Men

Sanilac County Community Mental Health is offering a weekly Trauma Recovery and Empowerment (M-TREM) therapy group for men. This recovery group adopts an explicitly psycho-educational and skill-oriented approach to recovery work. The connections between one's history and current skill deficits are described, alternative responses are explored, and exercises are used to practice new behaviors.

Is this therapy group for you? Have you ever experienced violence/trauma in your past?

- Natural disaster
- Fire or explosion
- Serious accident at home, work or while traveling
- Physical assault or assault with a weapon
- Unwanted/uncomfortable sexual assault
- Combat or exposure to war zone
- Sudden violent/unexpected death of a person close to you

If you answered yes to any of these, the M-TREM therapy group for men could help you.

What is required and expected of you:

- Commit to weekly meetings for 18 weeks
- A commitment to personal and relational health
- A closed confidential group of 10-15 men
- An openness to learn from others
- Psycho-educational topics including trust, anger, fear, intimacy and sex, physical, sexual abuse survivors, emotional/addictive behaviors, acceptance and letting go, building healthy relationships, managing feeling out of control
- An unexpected realization others have similar struggles and "I am not alone"

If you are interested in attending this men's therapy group please contact Sanilac County Community Mental Health at 810-648-0330.



Thank you for the millage!

Veterans Crisis Line to Open Third Call Center in Topeka, Kansas



The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced it is opening a Veterans Crisis Line (VCL) call center in Topeka, Kansas, the third such nationwide, and expects to hire 100 employees to staff the center, located on the campus of VA Eastern Kansas Health Care System.

VCL currently operates two centers in Canandaigua, New York, and Atlanta, Georgia.

The new call center, expected to open this fall, will give VCL the additional capacity as VA expands the “automatic transfer” function, Press 7, to its Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCS) and Vet Centers.

“When it comes to preventing Veteran suicide, we will do everything we can to make it as easy as possible for Veterans to reach us,” said VA Secretary Dr. David J. Shulkin. “The new center in Topeka gives us more feet

on the ground and an easier way for Veterans to connect with us when they need us most.”

The Press 7 function is already available at VA Medical Centers and provides immediate access to the crisis line from a main phone tree. Currently, CBOC and Vet Center phone systems do not provide that option, forcing Veterans to take an added step by dialing 800-273-8255, and the Pressing 1.

Since its launch in 2007, the VCL has answered more than 3 million calls and initiated the dispatch of emergency services to callers in imminent crisis more than 84,000 times. Since launching chat in 2009 and text services in November 2011, the VCL has answered nearly 359,000 and nearly 78,000 requests for chat and text services, respectively.

Have your Service-Connected Disabilities Gotten Worse?

Is it time to request an increase in your service-connected disabilities? The answer could be yes if they have gotten worse over time or if you have held the same percentage rating for 20 or more years. Caution is always used in determining whether it is in your best interest to request an increase. If you have not held the percentage rating for 20 years or more the VA has the

authority to reduce your rating. However, if the condition has worsened you might want to think about requesting an increase. If you have held the same percentage for 20+ years, with the exception of fraud, the VA cannot legally reduce your award so asking for an increase is an easy decision. If you would like me to review your claim, please give me a call!



Rides to VA Choice Card Appointments



We have recently started providing rides to veterans for their VA Choice Card appointments. If you have an appointment scheduled and would like a ride on our

transportation van please give us a call at 810-648-0212. We will do our best to accommodate you and provide you transportation!