



IOWA COUNTY VETERANS NEWSLETTER

Published by the Iowa County Veterans Service Office: 303 W. Chapel Street, Suite 1300, Dodgeville, WI 53533
Office Hours: M-F 8:30 am-4:30 pm Phone: 608/930-9865 Fax: 608/935-0358 Email: vet@iowacounty.org
Jeffrey T. Lindeman, County Veterans Service Officer

SUMMER, 2017

VETERANS CHOICE PROGRAM (VCP) PHONE LINE IMPOSTER

It has come to VA's attention that a phone line has been set up by an unknown party to potentially "mimic" the VCP phone line. This imposter phone line may be intended to reach Veterans who inadvertently dial the VCP number incorrectly. VHA Office of Community Care (VHA CC) has reported the "mimic" line to the VA Office of Inspector General for a possible civil or criminal investigation.

"Mimic" Phone Line

The phone line established to "mimic" the VCP phone line is 1-800-606-8198. You know you have reached the wrong VCP phone line when:

- The phone line offers callers a \$100 rebate if the caller provides a credit card.
- The caller is not notified he or she has reached U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs or the VCP phone line.

Be aware that this phone number incorrectly confirms callers have reached the VCP if the caller asks that question.

VCP Phone Line

The correct VCP phone line is **1-866-606-8198**. This line is for Veterans to check their eligibility for the VCP and ask questions about the program.

If you are unsure if you have reached the correct phone line, hang up and dial 1-866-606-8198 again.

The caller will be informed he or she has reached the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs or the Veterans Choice Program (VCP).

VETERANS CHOICE PROGRAM

On April 19, 2017, President Trump signed S. 544 after passing in both the House and Senate earlier in the month.

The Veterans Choice Expansion and Improvement Act, removes the original end date of the Veterans Choice Program, which was August 2017. This legislation also changes some billing issues to prevent veterans from having to pay co-payments and waiting for reimbursement when using providers outside the VA healthcare system. The billing changes change the VA from a secondary payer to a primary payer for services outside the VA healthcare system.

As has been the case in the past, Veterans Choice is not intended for emergency medical services. Eligibility and all appointments through Veterans Choice are to be pre-authorized by contacting **1(866)606-8198**.

VA DENTAL INSURANCE PROGRAM (VADIP) UPDATE

VADIP is a program that utilizes VA Healthcare enrollees as a "group" to provide dental insurance at a reduced premium rate. The dental insurance is provided through either Delta Dental or MetLife. There is a monthly premium cost to the veteran, though the rates are reasonable and vary depending upon the level of coverage chosen by the veteran.

The VADIP contracts with MetLife and Delta Dental expired as of January 31, 2017; this did not affect currently enrolled veterans. The program has recently been extended through December 31, 2021. A request for proposals was issued on January 27, 2017, according to the VADIP office, proposal bids were received from three companies. Contracts were to be awarded no later than March 31, 2017. New enrollments in the program should be accepted beginning June 1, 2017. The dental services provided through this program are not provided at the VA, this program provides coverage for dental services at local dental clinics throughout the nation.

ELDER RIGHTS PROJECT

The Elder Rights Project (ERP) provides free civil legal aid for victims of elder abuse. The ERP was formed through a partnership between Wisconsin Judicare and Legal Action of Wisconsin. If you or someone you know meets the following criteria, ERP may be able to help.

- Wisconsin resident
- 60 or older
- Victim of crime (elder abuse)
- Civil legal need related to their victimization

This assistance is not restricted to veterans only; this assistance is available to anyone that meets the criteria above. Contact (844)614-5468 if you or someone you know may need ERP's assistance.

VA FIXES VETERANS CRISIS LINE

In response to the recently released VA Office of Inspector General report that reviewed Veterans Crisis Line (VCL) processes from June 6 through December 15, 2016, the Department of Veterans Affairs stated the prior problems with the VCL have been resolved. Prior to opening a new call center in Atlanta, the call rollover rate was often more than 30 percent. The current call rollover rate is less than 1 percent. This means more than 99% of call to the VCL are answered by a person, not going to voicemail for a return call. To reach a VA professional, who is specifically trained to attend to emotional crises for veterans and service members.

- Dial the National Suicide Prevention Hotline **(800)273-TALK (8255)** Veterans should choose option 1 to reach a VCL responder

- Text **838255** – A VCL responder will text back
- Chat online at <https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/>

VA ID CARD

In 2015, the Veterans Identification Card Act was signed into law. This legislation directs the VA to issue a hard-copy photo ID card to any honorably discharged veteran who applies for one. Getting the card can come with a fee and the card must contain the veteran's name, photo and a non-Social Security identification number. The legislation is designed to help all veterans have a way to prove their service without carrying a copy of their DD-214. Before offering the new identification cards, a proposed policy governing the program and fees must be published in the Federal Register and opened for comment. No policy proposal has been published as of yet. This card is intended for veterans that are not enrolled in the VA healthcare system or retired from military service. Until the VA is able to start issuing these ID cards, Wisconsin still offers the "VETERAN" identifier on ID cards and driver licenses. Feel free to stop into the Veterans Service Office to obtain the DMV form to have the identifier placed on your Wisconsin ID documents.

MILWAUKEE COUNTY "3-DAY PASS" EVENTS

Some Milwaukee County attractions are offering special active duty/ veteran admission during the weekend leading up to Independence Day. This is the fourth time the "3-day pass" has been offered by the attractions listed below. You will have to provide proof of service; acceptable forms of service proof are DD-214, NGB22, VA Healthcare ID, WI driver license with VETERAN identifier, veterans' organization membership card or the Purple Heart Pass.

- June 30 – Milwaukee Art Museum, free admission, Vet +5
- July 1 – Milwaukee Public Museum, free admission, Vet +5
- July 1 – Discovery World, free admission, Vet +5

- July 2 – Milwaukee County Zoo, tickets required, limit of ten for immediate family only.

July 2 at the Milwaukee County Zoo is the annual Military/Veterans Family Day. The zoo offers free admission for military/veterans and their families. Admission tickets will be available at the end of May at the County Veterans Service Office (CVSO).

MILWAUKEE BREWERS OFFER FREE TICKETS TO VETERANS FOR SUNDAY HOME GAMES

The Milwaukee Brewers organization is again offering free Terrace Level seats for veterans for Sunday home games. The tickets are available by presenting proof of military service at windows 7-12 at the box office on the day of the game. These tickets cannot be reserved in advance. Sunday Brewers home games are listed below.

- June 4th and 18th
- July 2nd, 16th and 30th
- August 13th
- September 3rd and 24th

MILITARY APPRECIATION DAY AT THE “DUCK POND”

In keeping with the baseball theme, the Madison Mallards have scheduled their annual “Military Appreciation Day” for June 25th. Game time is 1:05 p.m. and the gates open at 11:30 a.m. In addition to ticket discounts, they will have a pre-game tribute to and recognition of veterans and Presentation of the Colors. Contact Matt Champeau at (608)246-4277 with questions or to purchase tickets in advance.

MEDICAL ID BRACELETS AND PENDANTS

Medical IDs are an important benefit that veterans can claim, free of charge. It is Veterans Health Administration policy that medical ID bracelets and pendants are made available for veteran patients at no cost. Medical ID is jewelry that could save your life. Medical conditions like diabetes, heart problems, PTSD, and injuries like embedded metal fragments can be engraved onto the surface of a medical ID bracelet or necklace. A veteran’s medical ID can also include prescribed medicines and emergency contacts. Veterans can choose from

veterans’ medical alert bracelets and necklaces from American Medical ID, free of charge. In the event of an emergency, this important information can help first responders and/or doctors in providing veterans with the precise treatment at the right time. Wearing a medical ID protects against potentially harmful medical errors and eliminates unnecessary trips to the hospital. It is easy to claim your veteran medical ID with the help of your clinician. Follow these simple steps to obtain this benefit:

- Download and print the VA information sheet to take to your clinician. The sheet is available at American Medical ID.
- Select from the available medical ID styles
- Discuss with your clinician what should be engraved on the medical ID
- The completed sheet will be submitted by your clinician to a purchasing agent for processing

The completed medical ID will be shipped to your desired address once the order is completed.

SISTER ASSISTER PROGRAM FOR WOMEN VETERANS

Sister Assisters are women volunteers who have completed specific training. A Sister Assister will help female veterans find their way around Madison VA. She will also attend appointments with the female veteran if she so desires. The Sister Assister may remain in the waiting area or provide support during the exam, depending on the preference of the veteran. If you are interesting in utilizing the services of the Sister Assister program, call (608)256-1901 extension 13440. If you are interested in becoming a Sister Assister Volunteer, contact Sandy Schumacher, Women Veterans program Manager at (608)256-1901 extension 11687.

THAT OLD, TATTERED FLAG

It is time again to retire the flags that have become too worn and faded to remain in service. The Mineral Point American Legion provides the location for the county-wide flag retirement ceremony. This year’s ceremony will be on June 20th at 7:00 p.m. If you have flags you would like to have retired, you can drop them off at several locations around the county as well as at the Veterans Service Office.

Iowa County Veterans Service Office
303 W. Chapel Street – Suite 1300
Dodgeville, WI 53533

Veterans Newsletter

IMPORTANT DATES

May 20 th	Armed Forces Day
May 29 th	Memorial Day
June 14 th	Flag Day
June 20 th	Flag Retirement – Mineral Point American Legion - 7:00 p.m.
July 2 nd	Free Admission for Active Military and Veterans at Milwaukee Co. Zoo
July 4 th	Independence Day

VETERANS SERVICE OFFICE HOLIDAY CLOSINGS IN 2017

Memorial Day	Monday, May 29 th
Independence Day	Tuesday, July 4 th
Labor Day	Monday, September 4 th
Thanksgiving Holiday	Thursday/Friday, November 23 rd & 24 th
Christmas Holiday	Friday/Monday, December 22 nd & 25 th