

Dear VA Maryland Health Care System E-News Subscriber:

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs recently announced information that we are sharing as it may be of interest to you:

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced, April 3, a number of actions to provide Veterans with financial, benefits and claims help amid VA's COVID-19 response.

“As all Americans come together to fight the COVID-19 pandemic, we want Veterans to be focused on their health and safety,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “That’s why we’re taking action to give those with pending debts, claims and appeals greater flexibility during these challenging times.”

The financial relief actions include the following until further notice:

- Suspending all actions on Veteran debts under the jurisdiction of the Treasury Department.
- Suspending collection action or extending repayment terms on preexisting VA debts, as the Veteran prefers.

For benefit debts, Veterans can contact the VA Debt Management Center at 1-800-827-0648 to make arrangements.

For health care debts, Veterans can contact the Health Resource Center at 1-888-827-4817 to make arrangements.

The benefits and claims relief actions include giving Veterans the option to submit their paperwork late for the following actions:

- perfecting claims
- challenging adverse decisions
- submitting Notices of Disagreement
- submitting Substantive Appeals
- responding to Supplemental Statements of the Case

Veterans requesting claim extensions can simply submit them with any late-filed paperwork and Veterans do not have to proactively request an extension in advance. For added convenience, VA will also accept typed/digital signatures instead of wet signatures on its forms. Those with questions can call 1-800-827-1000.

For Veterans who have been diagnosed with COVID-19 and need immediate action on their appeals, as opposed to a filing extension, the [Board of Veterans' Appeals](#) will Advance their appeal on Docket (AOD). [Click here](#) to find out how to file for AOD and what documentation is required.

Thank you.

VA Maryland Health Care System