

Dear VA Maryland Health Care System E-News Subscriber:

**Tell a Vet!** This is important news for all Veterans who aren't already enrolled for VA health care. Please share it with other Veterans.

## **Next PACT Act deadline: Health care enrollment for Veterans deployed to combat zones**

Until 11:59 p.m. Sept. 30, 2023, Veterans who deployed to a combat zone, never enrolled in VA health care and left the military between Sept. 11, 2001, and Oct. 1, 2013, are eligible to enroll directly in VA health care through the PACT Act. This special enrollment period gives Veterans who served in Iraq, Afghanistan and other combat zones an opportunity to enroll directly in VA health care without first applying for disability compensation benefits.

VA encourages all of these Veterans to visit [VA.gov/PACT](https://va.gov/PACT) or call 1-800-MYVA411 to learn more and sign up for VA health care before the deadline. Veterans who are enrolled in VA health care are proven to have better health outcomes than non-enrolled Veterans, and VA hospitals have dramatically outperformed non-VA hospitals in [overall quality ratings](#) and [patient satisfaction ratings](#). Additionally, VA health care is often [more affordable](#) than non-VA health care for Veterans.

This special enrollment period is a part of the PACT Act, the largest expansion of VA health care and benefits in generations. Since President Biden signed the PACT Act into law Aug. 10, 2022, more than 344,000 Veterans have enrolled in VA health care, and more than 4.2 million enrolled Veterans have been screened for toxic exposures.

### **"Don't wait. Apply today."**

"Are you a Veteran who deployed to a combat zone but never enrolled in VA health care? You should sign up now. Even if you don't need this care now, you may need it in the future, and once you're in, you have access for life. But don't wait – the deadline is Sept. 30 – so go to [VA.gov/PACT](https://va.gov/PACT) and apply today," said VA Secretary Denis McDonough.

Although this deadline is written into law for this specific group of Veterans, many other groups of Veterans are able to enroll directly in VA health care without first applying for VA benefits—including many Vietnam Veterans, Gulf War Veterans, Veterans who deployed to a combat zone and transitioned out of the service less than 10 years ago, and [more](#). Veterans who do not meet any of the above criteria can often still access VA health care by filing for VA benefits or based on income. If a Veteran is granted service connection for any health condition, they become eligible for VA care.

The PACT Act also expanded VA benefits for millions of Veterans, making more than 300 health conditions "presumptive" for service connection. This means that if an [eligible](#) Veteran has one of these health conditions and served in the applicable place during an applicable time, VA automatically assumes that the condition was caused by the Veteran's service and provides compensation and care accordingly.

Since the PACT Act was signed into law, VA has delivered more than \$1.85 billion in PACT Act benefits to Veterans and their survivors. VA encourages Veterans and their survivors to apply for these benefits now at [VA.gov/PACT](https://va.gov/PACT).

**Goal: Ensure all Veterans get the health care and benefits they deserve**

VA is currently in a full-court press to ensure that as many Veterans as possible enroll before September 30. To date, VA's PACT Act outreach campaign has included more than 2,000 events nationwide, \$13 million in paid media, 60,000 earned media clips, more than 400 million emails and letters to Veterans, the creation of a [one-stop-shop PACT Act website](#), and more. This is the largest outreach campaign in VA history, which has one goal in mind: ensure that all Veterans—and their survivors—get the health care and benefits they deserve under the PACT Act.

More information on eligibility for the special enrollment period can be found at [VA.gov/PACT](#). The period applies to Veterans who deployed to a combat zone, never enrolled in VA health care, and left the military between Sept. 11, 2001, and Oct. 1, 2013, specifically those who served in theater of combat operations during a period of war after the Persian Gulf War or in combat against a hostile force during a period of hostilities after Nov. 11, 1998.

For more information about how the PACT Act is helping Veterans and their survivors, visit VA's [PACT Act Dashboard](#). To apply for care or benefits today, visit [VA.gov/PACT](#) or call 1-800-MYVA411.

This information is taken from an article on the VA News website.

Visit <https://news.va.gov/123237/next-pact-act-deadline-enrollment-combat-zones>.

To learn more about the VA Maryland Health Care System, visit us online at [www.maryland.va.gov](http://www.maryland.va.gov).

Thank you.

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