

The Official Newsletter of the Cedar County Veterans Affairs Office

VA REOPENS HEALTH CARE ENROLLMENT

ISSUE 1

Summer 2009

(Courtesy of news release from the Department of Veterans Affairs June 19, 2009.)

WASHINGTON—The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), which now has nearly 8 million Veterans enrolled in its award-winning health care system, is poised to welcome nearly 266,000 more Veterans into its medical centers and clinics across the country by expanding access to health care enrollment for certain Veterans who had been excluded due to their income.

Under a new regulation effective June 15, 2009 VA will enroll Veterans whose income exceeds current means-tested thresholds by up to 10 percent. These Veterans were excluded from VA health care enrollment when income lim-

its were imposed in 2003 on Veterans with no service-connected disabilities or other special eligibility for care. There is no income limit for Veterans with compensable service-connected disabilities or for Veterans being seen for their service-connected disabilities.

Veterans who have applied for VA health care but were rejected due to income at any point in 2009 will have their applications reconsidered under the new income threshold formula. Those who applied before 2009, but were rejected due to income, must reapply. VA will contact these Veterans through a direct-mail campaign, Veterans service organizations, and a national and regional marketing campaign.

Cedar County Veterans may call the office to set up an appointment to apply for VA health benefits. In order to apply you will need a copy of your discharge papers, 2008 income information, insurance information, and dependent information.

The application process takes around 30 minutes to complete and once it is done. If you are accepted there is a yearly financial disclosure that will need to be done. This is a simple process once the initial application is completed.

As a reminder even if you are receiving compensation or a pension from the VA that does not mean you have been enrolled to receive health benefits. You must apply for those benefits.

Special points of interest:

- Monthly Commissioner Meetings are held on the 4th Wednesday of the month at 5:30 p.m. in the basement of the Cedar County Courthouse.
- The normal office hours are 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. However, please remember that the office is operated by 1 staff member. Therefore, there will be times when the office is closed. For your convenience, it is best to call 886-2170 before coming to the office to set up an appointment time.

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POST -9/11 GI BILL

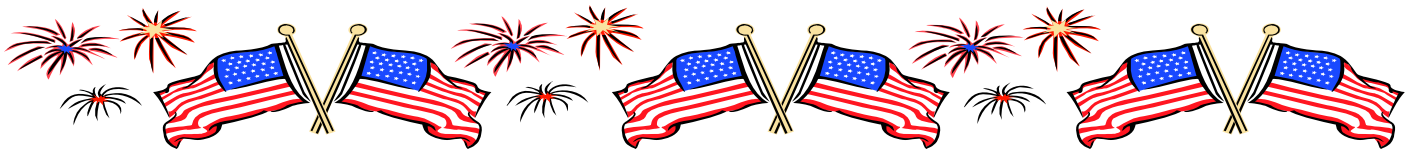
(Courtesy of news release from the Department of Veterans Affairs July 1, 2009)

The Post-9/11 GI Bill, is the most extensive educational assistance program authorized since the original GI Bill. This bill, which takes effect August 1st, allows eligible Veterans who served at least 90 days active duty since September 11, 2001, to receive an in-state, undergraduate education at a public in-

stitution at no cost. Under this new GI Bill, certain members of the armed forces may transfer benefits to a spouse or dependent children. There is an additional

Your financial advisors at the colleges will have the most up-to-date information regarding these benefits. Or you may call the office for more information on possible benefits.





ALS (LOU GEHRIG'S DISEASE) PRESUMPTIVE COMPENSABLE ILLNESS

On September 23, 2008 the Department of Veterans Affairs announced that ALS is a presumptive compensable illness that can be awarded to Veterans or their Widows. The new interim final regulation applies to all applications for benefits received by VA on or after September 23, 2008.

If you previously filed for compensation for ALS and were denied you should have received notification from the VA on this decision. If not you need to reapply.

What does this mean for Veterans? It means that if you are a Veteran with 90 days or more of continuous active service in the military and you have been diagnosed with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS)

you are entitled to Federal Benefits and monetary compensation.

If you are a Widow of a Veteran that died because of this disease you are now eligible for a VA widow's monthly benefit. There is no time limit on your right to file for this benefit. If your spouse died 40 years ago from this disease and meets the active duty requirements you are eligible to file for this benefit.

How do you file for this benefit? You need to contact the Cedar County Veterans Affairs office at 563-886-2170 and set up an appointment. At this appointment you will need to show the DD214 (discharge papers). It is also helpful if you have the treating physi-

cian's information also.

If you are a widow and applying for this benefit you will need to provide a copy of your marriage certificate and a copy of the death certificate. It would work best if the death certificate stated the cause of death was due to ALS or complications of ALS.

If you have significant medical documentation or are able to obtain the information that would be helpful. This information would support the disease as the cause of death even though not listed on the death certificate. The office can help in obtaining and gathering this information.

HONORS CORNER

This corner is reserved for recognizing the Cedar County Veterans who have left us. If you have recently lost a loved one who served in the military, please contact the office with their information.

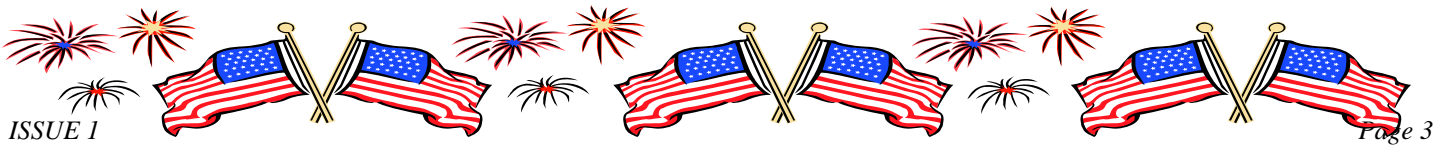
We will publish names, branch of service and service times of those who have recently passed.

Please understand that the office does not receive a list of Veterans who have

passed. The only names that can be published are those received from family or friends who contact the office with the information.

We will do our best to honor those who served our country honorably and be sure to publish it as such.





State of Iowa requiring local County VA offices

On July 1, 2009 each county in the state was required to have a Veterans Affairs office that is either owned or leased by the county and employee occupied in Veterans Affairs for a minimum amount of hours.

A counties population decides the amount of hours mandated to work. A county with 30,000 or less is 20 hours per week, a county with 30,001 to 60,000 is 30 hours, and a county of 60,001 or greater

is 40 hours per week.

There has also been a mandate regarding education. The person in the office must be Nationally accredited and maintain credit hours every year to keep that accreditation.

Cedar County is already in compliance with the new mandate. The Administrator received National Accreditation in 2007. This training required 40 hours classroom

time and passing of a test. The Administrator had to be approved by the General Counsel Department of Veterans Affairs. The training the Administrator obtained is similar to the education of National Service Organizations.

The Cedar County Veterans Affairs office is already compliant and exceeds the mandate of 20 hours by being open 35 hours per week to assist Veterans.

Agent Orange Presumptive Compensable Illnesses

Are you an in-country Vietnam Veteran? Did you also know that even if you did not sign up for health benefits prior to the cut off in 2003 that if you served in-country Vietnam you are still eligible due to the presumption of agent orange exposure?

If you served in Vietnam between January 9, 1962 and May 7, 1975 the following conditions will be presumed to be incurred or aggravated by such service, unless there is evidence of existence prior to service.

The diseases are as follows:

Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma becoming manifest to a degree of disability of 10% or more.

- Each soft-tissue sarcoma becoming manifest to a degree of disability of 10% or more other than osteosarcoma, chondrosarcoma, Kaposi's sarcoma, or mesothelioma.
- Chloracne or another acne form disease

- Type 2 diabetes (also know as Type II diabetes mellitus or adult-onset diabetes)
- Hodgkin's disease becoming manifest to a degree of disability of 10% or more
- Porphyria cutanea tarda
- Respiratory cancers (cancer of the lung, bronchus, larynx, or trachea)
- Multiple myeloma
- Acute and subacute peripheral neuropathy
- Prostate cancer
- Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia

Each additional disease that the Secretary of the VA determines warrants a presumption of service-connection by reason of having positive association with exposure to an herbicide agent.

Veterans having a disease referred to above shall be presumed to have been exposed during their service to

a herbicide agent containing dioxin.

There are many different stipulations that go along with these presumptive conditions. It is best to make contact with your local Veterans Affairs Office to discuss whether you may be eligible for federal compensation for any of these conditions.

Only after you file for benefits and allow the Federal Government look at the information will you know if you qualify. It is never too late to file for benefits.

There have been so many Vietnam Veterans diagnosed with conditions and didn't know that they could be receiving tax free monetary benefits.

If you have a different type of illness that is not listed, please don't presume it is not service connectable. There are many different things, knee injuries, ringing of the ears, hearing loss, shoulder injuries, and the list goes on.

It is not too late, give the office a call and see what can be done.

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Office**

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Veteran Commissioners

Who are your Cedar County Veteran Commissioners?

Bruce Jeffries, Chairman

John Sauer

Patrick Ihns

Marlin Hillyer

Virgil Kruckenberg



What's happening at your local VA Medical Clinic?

A new Cedar Rapids Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) will open on or about August 24, 2009. The address will be:

2230 Wiley Blvd
Cedar Rapids, IA 52404

Who is this clinic for? The Veterans closer to the Cedar Rapids area. If this location would be more convenient for you than the drive into Iowa City or Coralville area

you can elect to go to the Cedar Rapids Community Based Outpatient Clinic. The physicians and staff are still VA employed just located at a location other than the VA in Iowa City.

What should a Veteran do if he/she is interested in the Cedar Rapids Outpatient clinic?

Any interested Veteran, currently enrolled, needs to immediately call patient registration at (319-338-0581 ext 6350) and ask that their care be transferred to Cedar Rapids.

Veterans not currently enrolled should contact the local County Veteran Service Officer as soon as possible. An application 1010EZ form needs to be submitted.

You will need your DD214 and last year's financial information unless you are service connected. Then you will just need a copy of that adjudication. Call the office to set up an appointment time.