

# WDVA Program Overview and PACT Act

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# MAJOR PROGRAMS

- State Veterans Homes
- Transitional Housing Program
- State Veterans Cemetery
- Veterans Services
- Counseling and Wellness



WASHINGTON STATE  
DEPARTMENT OF  
**VETERANS  
AFFAIRS**  
*"Serving Those Who Served"*



# STATE VETERANS HOMES



## Spokane Veterans Home

Spokane  
Serving 100 Residents



## WA Soldiers Home

Orting  
Serving 97 Residents



## WA Veterans Home

Port Orchard  
Serving 240 Residents  
Memory Care Provided



## Walla Walla Veterans Home

Walla Walla  
Serving 80 Residents  
Memory Care Provided

Our State Veterans Homes are Medicaid and Medicare Certified and provide 24-hour nursing care, medical care and pharmacy services. **Veterans rated 70%-100% Service Connected, or whose service-connected disability is the reason nursing care is needed, may have their nursing home care paid by the Federal VA.**

**As part of residing in our homes, our residents benefit from:**

- Physical Therapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Recreational Activities
- Social Services
- Volunteer Programs
- Hospice
- Nutritious Meals
- Community Involvement
- Religious Programs
- Transportation
- Laundry
- Beauty & Barber Shops
- Fishing Pond (Orting)

**To be eligible for admission, applicants must meet the following criteria:**

- Served at any time, in any branch of the United States Armed Forces including the National Guard;
- Received an honorable discharge;
- Reside in Washington State;
- Be the spouse of a resident or widow of an eligible veteran;
- Or be a Gold Star Parent who lost a child while serving in the armed forces.



# STATE BENEFITS

- **Reduced Fishing/Hunting License (DV 30%+)**
- **State Park Passes (DV 30%+)**
- **Federal Park Passes (all veterans)**
- **Reduced Public Transportation Fees (DV 40%+)**
- **Reduced Tuition at Public Colleges and Universities**
- **Free License Plates for 100% disabled veterans and Gold Star spouses and parents.**
- **Reduced Property Taxes (DV 80%+), contact the county assessor for more information**
- **Recording of Discharges**
  - **DD 214 Database**
  - **Governor's Welcome Home Letters**
- **County Veterans Assistance Funds**



# WHAT IS THE PACT ACT?

The Sergeant First Class (SFC) Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act : PL 117-168



Vietnam



Gulf War Era



Post9/11



The **PACT Act** is a new law that expands VA health care and benefits for Veterans exposed to burn pits and other toxic substances

The Act **(1)** expands and extends eligibility for VA health care for Veterans with toxic exposures and Veterans of the Vietnam era, Gulf War era, and Post-9/11 era, and **(2)** expands eligibility for benefits for Veterans exposed to toxic substances



[www.va.gov/pact](http://www.va.gov/pact)



# KEY COMPONENTS



**VA Health care staff and claims processors will receive toxic exposure-related education and training.**



**The Act expands and extends eligibility for VA health care for Veterans with toxic-exposures and Veterans of the Vietnam era, Gulf War era, and Post-9/11 era.**



**Every enrolled Veteran will receive an initial toxic exposure screening and a follow-up screening every five years. Veterans who are not enrolled, but who are eligible to enroll, will have an opportunity to enroll and receive the screening.**



**The Act authorizes 31 new medical facilities across the country, providing greater access to VA health care**

# PRESUMPTIONS OF EXPOSURE

If you served in any of these locations and time periods, we've determined that you had exposure to burn pits or other toxins. We call this having a presumption of exposure.

On or after September 11, 2001, in any of these locations:

- Afghanistan
- Djibouti
- Egypt
- Jordan
- Lebanon
- Syria
- Uzbekistan
- Yemen

The airspace above any of these locations

On or after August 2, 1990, in any of these locations:

- Bahrain
- Iraq
- Kuwait
- Oman
- Qatar
- Saudi Arabia
- Somalia
- The United Arab Emirates (UAE)

The airspace above any of these locations



# PRESUMPTIVE CONDITIONS

**These cancers are now presumptive:**

- **Brain cancer**
- **Gastrointestinal cancer of any type**
- **Glioblastoma**
- **Head cancer of any type**
- **Kidney cancer**
- **Lymphoma of any type**
- **Melanoma**
- **Neck cancer of any type**
- **Pancreatic cancer**
- **Reproductive cancer of any type**
- **Respiratory (breathing-related) cancer of any type**
- **These illnesses are now presumptive:**
- **Asthma that was diagnosed after service**

- **Chronic bronchitis**
- **Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)**
- **Chronic rhinitis**
- **Chronic sinusitis**
- **Constrictive bronchiolitis or obliterative bronchiolitis**
- **Emphysema**
- **Granulomatous disease**
- **Interstitial lung disease (ILD)**
- **Pleuritis**
- **Pulmonary fibrosis**
- **Sarcoidosis**





# FILING CLAIMS

**Veterans can file a claim for the new presumptive conditions:**

- **New Claim – Veteran has never filed for the presumptive condition.**
- **Supplemental Claim – The presumptive condition was previously denied but is now considered to be presumptive.**

**\* Presumptive conditions do not require proof that the military service caused the condition. Veterans only need to meet the service requirements and have a current diagnosis of the presumptive condition. Veterans should submit any supporting documentation to assist with their claim.**



# Veteran Services & Counseling and Wellness Division Update

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**Goal 1:  
Save and Transform Lives**



We continue to mitigate risk factors and enhance protective factors:

- » WDVA's counseling program provides confidential counseling services to State Veterans and their families. We plan to expand these services to 2 additional rural counties this year. As of December 1st, WDVA has provided 5,193 hours of counseling service hours with a target of 13,461 by June 30th.
- » The Suicide Prevention Team provides LEARN training which teaches essential skills for support and suicide prevention, specifically tailored to Veterans, their loved ones, and those who work with or support them. The team conducted 11 sessions with 205 attendees as of December with a target of 900 attendees by June 30th. Our WDVA Team can sign up for LEARN training in the Learning Center and the public can request a LEARN training by emailing: Connect@dva.wa.gov.
- » A TV commercial promoting the "988 Lifeline | There is Hope" emblem launched in December on select networks in the greater Puget Sound area. Emblem sales provide funding for Suicide Prevention Community Grants. The first grant will be awarded in April 2024 to a non-profit organization using evidence-based peer-led Suicide Prevention Efforts.

**Objective 1**  
*Focus on health, growth, well-being, connectivity, and purpose, resulting in a 20% reduction in suicide among Veterans by 2025*



Reducing Veterans at risk or experiencing homelessness by increasing our Transitional Housing Program capacity:

- » THP added onsite licensed Mental Health professional services in Orting and Port Orchard. This means THP clients can receive these essential services more quickly and at their THP location. In some cases, this significantly reduces the wait time for clients to access mental health services.
- » A contract with VA Puget Sound will bring 5 recuperative care beds to THP Port Orchard. This program allows veterans experiencing homelessness to receive needed medical procedures and then recover in a safe and stable environment with the goal of exiting the program to permanent housing. We expect program implementation in the March 2024 timeframe.
- » Capital facilities upgrades are underway at both THP locations and are anticipated to be finalized by September 2024. These upgrades mean that more of our Veterans will have private rooms with private bathrooms.

**Objective 2**  
*Place 80 Veterans experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness in permanent housing by October 2025*

**30 / 80  
VETERANS IN  
PERMANENT  
HOUSING**



**Goal 3:  
Be the leading state in Veteran service delivery and outcomes**



» What makes up the "quality care" measure? Resident conditions such as ...

- Urinary Tract Infection
- Activities of Daily Living Decline
- High Risk Pressure Ulcer
- Catheter
- Physical Restraints
- Moderate to Severe Pain

» Since June 2023, WDVA has increased our quality enhancement incentives from \$26,364 to \$53,509. That's a 103% increase! That is more money in our Homes Program budget.

» We will also be hiring a Clinical Case Manager to ensure we are coding services rendered and getting reimbursed for services.

» Veteran Services has focused on additional Veteran Service Officers (VSO) resources in underserved rural counties. Last fall, WDVA contracted with two additional counties:

Asotin and Skamania. Additionally, WDVA hired two FTE VSOs in King County and is in the process of hiring two VSOs in Kittitas and Skagit counties. 28 of Washington's 39 counties now have local VSO support.

» Current performance = 30% of Washington Veterans receive VA disability benefits!

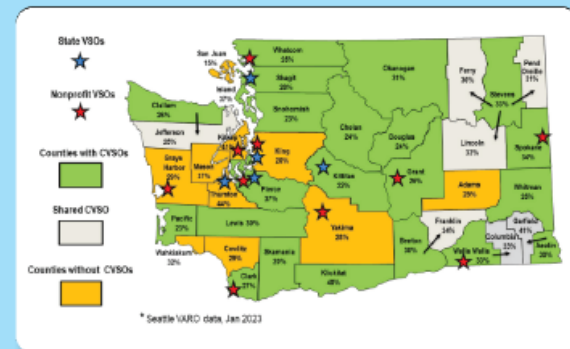
**Objective 1**  
*All State Veterans Homes achieve and sustain a Medicare 5-Star quality measure rating by 2026*

**Homes Current Performance**



*\*The quality measure health performance is different from the overall rating measurement.*

**Objective 2**  
*Increase the percentage of WA State Veterans connected to their earned disability compensation benefit from 28% to 33% by 2026*



# **Definition of a Veteran for the purpose of State veterans benefits**

**SSHB 2014 – RCW 41.04.005, RCW 41.04.007**

- **State definition of “veteran,” expanding state veterans’ benefits to any veteran who is already eligible for federal Department of Veterans Affairs monetary benefits**
- **Creates eligibility for state benefits for veterans who were separated with less than honorable characterizations of service due solely to sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression or actions or statements related to sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression, regardless of characterization of service**



# Connect to *Your* WDVA!

1-800-562-2308

[www.dva.wa.gov](http://www.dva.wa.gov)

## WDVA Central Office

1-800-562-2308 or  
[benefits@dva.wa.gov](mailto:benefits@dva.wa.gov)

## State Veterans Homes

1-877-838-7787

## State Veterans Cemetery

509-299-6286

## Employment at WDVA

For current employment opportunities  
visit [www.careers.wa.gov](http://www.careers.wa.gov)

Direct Line (360) 725-2200

## Follow us on Social Media!

Facebook (WSDVA):

[www.facebook.com/wsdva](http://www.facebook.com/wsdva)

Twitter (WDVA):

<https://twitter.com/WDVA>

LinkedIn:

[www.linkedin.com/company/Washington-state-department-of-veterans-affairs-recruiting](http://www.linkedin.com/company/Washington-state-department-of-veterans-affairs-recruiting)

Instagram (WSDVA):

<https://www.instagram.com/wsdva>

YouTube: Washington Department of  
Veterans Affairs or WDVA

<https://www.youtube.com/user/WAVeteransAffairs/video>

