

*Olmsted County  
Veteran Services  
Veterans Advocate Newsletter  
May 2022*

**Veteran Services is now open for scheduled appointments ONLY.**

The Olmsted County Veteran Service office will meet with veterans by appointment ONLY. We hope this does not create a burden for our veterans, and families; however, we need the time to provide you the best customer service when you are in our office, without making you wait for an undetermined amount of time to meet with one of us. To make an appointment, please visit [www.olmstedcounty.gov/veterans](http://www.olmstedcounty.gov/veterans), or call our office at 507.328.6355.

**When you make an appointment, please write it down, or make yourself a reminder, as we have had many no shows and cancellations. This is time that another veteran could have used.**

We are unable to assist veterans outside of Olmsted County. Every county in Minnesota provides a veteran service officer to assist you. You can find your county veteran service officer by visiting [www.macvso.org](http://www.macvso.org).

Thank you for your service.

[Olmsted County Veterans Appointment Calendar](#)

**Veterans | Olmsted County, MN**

**Address:**

Olmsted County Veteran Services Office  
2100 Campus Drive SE, Suite 200  
Rochester, MN 55904

**Phone:** 507-328-6355

**Fax:** 507-328-7950

**Email:** [veteranservices@olmstedcounty.gov](mailto:veteranservices@olmstedcounty.gov)

## ***VA Summary of Benefits Letter***

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Benefits Administration sends out a summary of benefits letter, annually, to those veterans and family members that are currently receiving VA compensation, pension, or dependency indemnity compensation. These letters come directly from the VA around May. If you do not receive this letter by June each year, or you need to update your address with the VA you should call 1-800-827-1000.

*“This letter is a summary of benefits you currently receive from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). We are providing this letter to disabled Veterans to use in applying for benefits such as housing entitlements, free or reduced state park annual memberships, state or local property or vehicle tax relief, civil service preference, or any other program or entitlement in which verification of VA benefits is required. **Please safeguard this important document.**”*

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## ***VA Family Caregivers Update***

As of March 22, 2022, VA is reviewing and examining the current Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) eligibility criteria. During this time, here's what

[Family Caregivers of Legacy Participants and Legacy Applicants](#) can expect:

- VA will continue to complete transitional reassessments of legacy participants, legacy applicants, and their family caregivers. Any family caregiver eligible for an increase in caregiver benefits will receive them. Legacy participants, legacy applicants and their family caregivers may decline the reassessment; however, no increase in benefits can be provided without the completion of a reassessment.
- VA will not discharge or decrease any support to legacy participants, legacy applicants and their family caregivers, based on reassessment, to include monthly stipends paid to primary family caregivers before the current eligibility criteria are examined.

While VA conducts a review and examination of the current PCAFC eligibility criteria, legacy participants, legacy applicants and their family caregivers will remain enrolled in PCAFC and continue to receive support and services under PCAFC, unless revoked or discharged for a reason unrelated to reassessment. Please see the [Revocation and Discharge Fact Sheet \(va.gov\)](#) for additional information.

- VA will consider making changes to the current PCAFC eligibility criteria, if necessary.

VA continues to develop additional information for legacy participants, legacy applicants and their family caregivers.

# Women Veteran Over 40 Discussion Group

This group will provide an opportunity for women veterans 40 years old and over to come together for support and community while learning creative ways to choose joy, spread joy, and receive joy using evidence-based approaches to support stress relief, resilience, productivity, and healthy living.

Sessions include:

- Discussion on relevant physical, emotional, and spiritual health and wellness topics
- SMART goal development and accountability
- Aromatherapy education for overall wellness and application for targeted support
- Education and preparation of aroma stick, rollerball, or spray for application at home

**Hosted by:** Dr. Letticia N. Callies, DMin, MA, CCA

**Where:** VFW Post 1215, back conference room, 2775 43rd Street NW, Rochester, MN 55901

**When:** Tuesdays, Feb 1 Mar 1 Apr 5 May 3 Jun 7 Jul 5 Aug 2 Sept 6 Oct 4 Nov 1 Dec 6

**Time:** 6pm-8pm



# Center for Grief Education and Support



## ONGOING PROGRAMS

*Please note that our groups have two different formats (Virtual = V or In-Person= IP).*

### **NEWLY BEREAVED GROUP**

A group for anyone who has experienced the death of a loved one within the last year.

### **PREGNANCY & INFANT LOSS**

A group for those who have lost a baby through miscarriage, stillbirth, at the time of birth or within the first month after birth.

### **TEEN SUPPORT GROUP**

A group for teens grades 7-12 in a safe, creative space where they can share their story of loss.

### **SURVIVORS OF SUICIDE GROUP**

A group for those who have lost someone close to them through suicide.

### **STEPPING STONES**

A group for ages 65 and younger who have lost a spouse or significant other. We will meet outside around our fire table, weather permitting.

### **VETERANS LOSS & TRANSITION DISCUSSION GROUP**

A discussion group led by veterans and CGES staff focusing on the challenges and transitions experienced by veterans.

### **PET LOSS GROUP**

A group for those who have lost a pet through death.

### **YOUNG ADULT LOSS**

A group for young adults who have experienced a recent death.

## SPECIAL PROGRAMS

### **ADULT GRIEF GROUP/YOUNG LOSS GRIEF GROUP**

These ten-week groups provide a safe, confidential place to learn about the process of grieving and teaches practical coping strategies to manage the experience of accepting the reality of the loss. Offered in Spring, Fall and Winter.

### **MOVING AHEAD: REBUILDING YOUR LIFE**

When we lose a loved one, we find ways to accept the reality and gradually discover the extent of our losses. As our journeys continue, we begin to look at what we can rebuild for ourselves; what life holds for us. Registration is required.

### **MANAGING HOLIDAYS AND SPECIAL DAYS**

A virtual workshop providing an opportunity to explore the difficulties associated with mourning during special days and steps to manage those experiences.

### **MEMORIES OF THE HEART**

A virtual memorial service including candle lighting, music, reflections and a reading of the names being remembered.

### **TREE OF MEMORIES**

Located on the Seasons Hospice Administrative Office grounds. The tree will remain illuminated throughout the holiday season.

All grief group participants must be registered 24 hours in advance. To register or for more information please email [CGES@seasonshospice.org](mailto:CGES@seasonshospice.org). Virtual (V) groups will be using Zoom and participants will receive a link or phone number after registering.

In-person (IP) group participants must register, wear a mask, have temperature taken upon arrival and complete a questionnaire prior to each group.

Individual counseling is available via phone or in-person by appointment.

We offer individual counseling by appointment. All sessions and groups are held at the Center for Grief Education and Support.

1696 Greenview Drive SW, Rochester, MN 55902 Phone: 507-285-1930 Email: [cges@seasonshospice.org](mailto:cges@seasonshospice.org) Web: [www.seasonshospice.org/grief-support](http://www.seasonshospice.org/grief-support)

*Support Group +*

*Veterans Peer Support Group*

*Treatment Court Peer Support Group*

AT The VFW Rochester, MN POST 1215

2775 43rd Street NW

Rochester, MN 55901

Phone: (507) 289-6299

Time: 12-2 pm

Date: Every Other Friday, 4/14/22

This Group is also available via Zoom upon request !

RSVP if can/ cannot attend,

Contact us if you need a ride via call or text.

Lisa 651-564-1256 and Floyd 507-993-4147

**Every Veteran Has A Story!**

# How VA Health Care & Medicare Work Together

It's possible to have VA and Medicare benefits at the same time. Having both types of coverage is helpful if you need specialized care, if you have a condition not connected to your military service, or if you want to use non-VA providers. Because the Department of Veterans Affairs assigns each beneficiary to a [priority group](#) that determines how much you pay for services, having Medicare is especially helpful if you're in one of the lower priority groups with higher out-of-pocket costs. If you decide to enroll in Medicare, your VA benefits pay for VA-authorized services, and Medicare pays for Medicare-covered services.

MEDICARE PLAN TYPE	WORKS WITH VA HEALTH CARE?	HOW THE PLAN CAN HELP	IS ENROLLMENT WORTH IT?
Part A	Y	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Covers care at a non-VA facility</li> </ul>	Yes, because it gives you more flexibility when seeking medical care.
Part B	Y	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May pay for services not covered by your VA benefits.</li> <li>Allows you to use non-VA doctors</li> </ul>	Yes, because Medicare Part B can help reduce your out-of-pocket costs if your VA benefits don't cover some services.
Part C	Y	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May cover more services than your VA benefits</li> </ul>	Yes, because Medicare Part C combines the benefits available under Original Medicare into a single plan that may cover more than your VA plan.
Part D	Y	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Covers prescriptions filled at non-VA pharmacies/facilities</li> </ul>	Maybe. VA benefits typically cover the same prescriptions Medicare does, but some plans may have a lower copay for prescriptions than VA.
Medigap	Y	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pays for most of your portion of costs for Original Medicare services</li> <li>Can help you reduce your out-of-pocket costs if you decide to use Medicare instead of your VA benefits</li> </ul>	Yes, because a Medigap plan can save you money if you have to seek care from a non-VA provider.

## VA benefits and Medicare Part A

Medicare Part A covers the care you receive in an [inpatient facility](#), such as a hospital or skilled nursing center. Services covered include nursing care, laboratory tests, X-rays, and surgical procedures. Because VA benefits and [Medicare benefits](#) are separate, you should enroll in Medicare Part A if there's any chance you'll ever need to go to a non-VA facility for inpatient care. If you go to a non-VA facility and don't have Medicare or some other type of insurance, your VA benefits [may not cover](#) your stay. Enrolling in Medicare Part A ensures you have coverage for ailments not connected to your military service. Many veterans qualify for premium-free Part A. You may also [qualify for assistance](#) for Part B premiums.

## VA benefits and Medicare Part B

Medicare Part B covers preventive and [medically necessary services](#), including ambulance services, doctors' services, durable medical equipment, clinical research, and mental health treatment. You should enroll in Medicare Part B to ensure you have adequate coverage for your health care needs, whether they're service-connected or otherwise. Should you ever lose some of your VA benefits, or your VA benefits don't cover everything you need, you'll be able to use Medicare Part B instead of paying 100% of the expenses out of your own pocket. Although Medicare Part B has a monthly premium (\$170.10 in 2022) and an annual deductible (\$233 in 2022), it's well worth it if it helps you avoid high out-of-pocket costs. It's wise to enroll in Part B during your initial enrollment period unless you have other employer-sponsored coverage. You may incur late penalties if you wait to enroll. You must be enrolled in Parts A and B if you want [TRICARE for Life](#).

## VA benefits and Medicare Part C

Medicare Advantage Plans, also known as [Medicare Part C](#), combine the benefits of Medicare Parts A and B, and in most cases, Part D prescription drug coverage, into a single plan offered by a private health insurance company instead of the federal government. As an alternative way to receive your Medicare benefits, all Medicare Advantage Plans must offer the same level of coverage as [Original Medicare](#). Most insurers cover additional services, such as dental, hearing, and vision care.

Enrolling in Medicare Part C can help reduce your out-of-pocket medical expenses by covering services that aren't covered by your VA benefits. You must be enrolled in Medicare Parts A and B to join a Medicare Advantage Plan. You are still responsible for your Part B monthly premium but will likely have access to a zero-premium Medicare Advantage Plan that includes drug coverage. Medicare Advantage Plans provide care from in-network providers to keep your costs as low as possible. All plans have an out-of-pocket maximum for Medicare-covered services. With Original Medicare, there is no limit on what you may spend for your portion of expenses.

## VA benefits and Medicare Part D

Medicare Part D prescription drug coverage, whether as a standalone plan or a Medicare Advantage Plan with drug coverage, covers at least [two prescription medications](#) per drug category. Because VA drug coverage applies only to prescriptions [filled at a VA pharmacy](#) or other VA facility, enrolling in Medicare Part D is a good idea if you don't live near a VA pharmacy or you want more flexibility in choosing a pharmacy. Depending on the plan you select, Medicare Part D may also cover a wider variety of medications, often with a lower copayment. If you live near a VA pharmacy and don't mind going there to pick up your prescriptions, you may not need to enroll in Medicare Part D.

Your VA drug benefit counts as creditable coverage for Medicare Part D purposes. If you decide to defer enrollment in Part D, you will not incur late penalty charges if you join a Medicare drug plan at a later time.

## VA benefits and Medigap

Medigap, also known as [Medicare Supplement Insurance](#), covers copays, coinsurance, and most deductibles for services covered by Original Medicare. To purchase one of these plans, you must be enrolled in Medicare Part A and Medicare Part B. You cannot have a Medicare Advantage Plan and a Medigap policy at the same time.

You should consider a Medigap plan if there's a chance you'll need care at a non-VA facility, as your VA benefits only cover services through VA providers. If you need to visit a non-VA hospital or clinic, you'll be able to use your Original Medicare benefits. Then Medigap will pay its share of the remaining costs, leaving you with fewer unpredictable out-of-pocket medical expenses. You will pay a monthly premium for a Medigap policy.

# How TRICARE Works With Medicare

TRICARE provides health coverage for [members of the military](#), their family members, and retired service members. The program also includes dental plans, prescription drug plans, and special programs for enrollees with certain medical conditions. If you qualify for Medicare, you can use your TRICARE benefits along with your Medicare benefits to reduce your out-of-pocket costs as much as possible.

If you have TRICARE for Life, Medicare acts as the primary payer. In most cases, TRICARE is your secondary payer. However, if you have some other type of insurance, TRICARE won't pay anything toward your health care costs until claims have been submitted to Medicare and your other insurance company. If you want coverage through TRICARE for Life, you must have Medicare Part A and Medicare Part B. [TRICARE for Life](#) acts as a supplement to Medicare and covers your Medicare cost-sharing.

TRICARE pharmacy benefits cover a wide range of prescription medications, as long as each drug is approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Your provider must also prescribe each medication "in accordance with [good medical practice](#) and established standards of quality" for the drug to be covered by TRICARE. Therefore, you may not need Medicare Part D, which also covers prescription drugs. However, if you meet certain financial criteria, you may [qualify for help paying Medicare Part D](#) premiums and drug costs.

With TRICARE Prime, it's possible to have Medicare Part B without having Part A coverage. You may also want to consider purchasing a Medigap plan, as Medigap covers some of the costs not covered by Original Medicare, such as copays and co-insurance. Having TRICARE Standard or Prime, Original Medicare, and a Medigap plan can help you reduce your out-of-pocket costs if you need ongoing care for a chronic illness. Understand more about your [TRICARE and Medicare benefits](#).



**Chapter 28** *presents a*  
**Women Veteran Seminar**  
**WOMEN VETERANS OF SE MN,**  
*This event is for you!*

You are invited to an open house style seminar of benefits, resources, healthcare, and wellness.

**When: Thursday, May 26, 2022**

**Time: 3:00pm-8:00pm**

**Where: VFW Post 1215,  
2775 43rd St NW,  
Rochester, MN 55901**

For more information and to register, please visit:  
<https://davsemn2022wvseminar.eventbrite.com>

**\*Please note: The resources highlighted at this event are specific to SE MN . Registration is limited to this area. If you are interested in a similar event your area, please contact your local DAV chapter. You may find your chapter by visiting [www.davmn.org](http://www.davmn.org)**



**REGISTER NOW EVENT REGISTRATION CLOSES SOON!!!!**



# **COMBAT VETERANS MOTORCYCLE ASSOCIATION 48-2 Second Annual Iron Ride**

**Our Ride Will Take Place on**

**June 4<sup>th</sup> 2022**

Partial Proceeds will go to the IRONWOOD SPRINGS CHRISTIAN CAMP  
And other proceeds will go towards VETS HELPING VETS in our local area

**LOCATION: Stewartville American Legion**

**1100 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave NW, Stewartville, MN 55976**

**REGISTRATION: 9 AM – 11 AM**

**RIDERS: \$20.00 PASSENGERS: \$10.00**

**KICKSTANDS UP 11:00 am SHARP**

**GUN RAFFLE WINNERS TO FOLLOW**



# Have you heard of Forest Bathing?



Forest bathing walks are guided, mindful walks that allow participants to slow down and use their five senses to immerse in the forest. Come see what it's about!



Experience the healing power of the forest!

Join us on the following dates:

- Sunday, June 19 from 2 – 4 pm
- Sunday, July 17 from 2 – 4 pm
- Sunday, August 14 from 2 – 4 pm



Space is limited. To sign up, contact [Sara.holger@state.mn.us](mailto:Sara.holger@state.mn.us).



# PTSD Support Group

**Want to:** Know that others are going through something similar to you? Learn tips on how to handle day-to-day challenges? Meet new friends or connect with others who understand you? Learn how to talk about things that bother you or how to ask for help? Learn to trust other people? Hear about helpful new perspectives from others? Then this is the group for you!

SEMCIL, and Olmsted County Veteran Services is offering a support group for Veterans that have been diagnosed with PTSD, or those who have signs and symptoms of PTSD, and their family members. Sometimes the most painful injuries aren't physical. Whether it's PTSD, TBI, combat stress, or any other mental health condition, we're here to help you get through it. The group will be facilitated by Jennifer Shumaker, Veteran and Olmsted County Veterans Service Officer.

**Where:** VFW Post 1215, 2775 43rd St NW (back room)

**When:** Thursday's 2022 dates

**Mar 24, Apr 21, May NO MEETING**

**Jun 23, Jul 28, Aug 25, Sep 29, Oct 20, Nov 17, Dec 15**

**Time:** 6:30PM-8:00PM

Questions call or email: Jennifer Shumaker, 507-328-6355 or

[shumaker.jennifer@co.olmsted.mn.us](mailto:shumaker.jennifer@co.olmsted.mn.us)

## Memorial Day Program 2022 Rochester, MN

On Monday May 30, 2022, the Memorial Day Program will start at 10:00 AM with a procession from the tennis courts at Soldiers Field and proceed to the Soldiers Field Veterans Memorial. The Program at Soldiers Field Veterans Memorial will start at 10:30 AM. At the conclusion of the Program, the veteran organizations will be honoring the dead whose remains are buried at sea at the Center Street Bridge by the Civic Center at noon. If you would like to be in the Procession, you are more than welcome to do so, just show up. All groups or individuals who will be in the Procession need to be at the tennis courts at Soldiers Field at 9:30AM.

Contact Information for questions:

Joe P Brown Sr.

President Rochester Veterans Memorial Association

Email: [Brown49tex@charter.net](mailto:Brown49tex@charter.net)

Phone Cell: (507) 990-1347

# LOCAL MEETINGS

Some organizations have resumed meetings. Call each one respectively for more information.

## **Rochester American Legion Post 92**

(507)282-1322  
915 21st Ave SE  
Rochester, MN 55904  
3rd Tuesday of each month  
6pm

Auxiliary Unit 92  
3rd Tuesday of each month  
5:30pm

Sons of the American Legion  
2nd Thursday of each month  
6PM

Legion Riders  
3rd Thursday of each month  
7pm

## **Rochester VFW Post Meeting**

(507) 289-6818  
2775 43rd St. NW  
Rochester, MN 55901  
2nd Tuesday of each Month VFW Post 1215  
7pm  
Marine Corps League  
4th Tuesday of each month  
7pm

## **Byron American Legion Post 119**

(507) 775-6871  
505 Frontage Road NW, Byron, MN  
3rd Monday of the month  
6pm

## **Vietnam Veterans of America**

(507) 990-1347  
Meets 4th Monday each month  
at 7:00pm,  
Vietnam Veterans Spouse Support Group  
Meets 4th Monday each month  
At 7:00pm  
Thor Detachment 606 Marine Corp League Meeting  
4th Tuesday of the month, 7pm  
MOPH  
3rd Thursday of the month 6pm  
VFW Post 1215  
2775 43rd St NW, Rochester, MN 55901

## **Stewartville American Legion Post 164**

(507) 533-9281  
1100 2nd Ave NW, Stewartville  
Meeting 3rd Monday each month, 7:30pm

## **Stewartville VFW Post 8980**

(507) 533-9281  
1100 2nd Ave NW, Stewartville  
Meeting 1st Monday each month, 7pm

## **DAV Meeting**

(507) 773-5055  
1652 Hwy 52 N, Rochester, MN 55901  
2nd Monday, of each Month Rochester's Elks Lodge  
5:30pm dinner, meeting at 6:00pm  
DAV Auxiliary  
Meetings on hold through March 2022  
Contact Margo for more information:  
[MNDAVAux28@gmail.com](mailto:MNDAVAux28@gmail.com)

## **Korean Veterans**

Every Monday at Grandmas Kitchen  
1514 N Broadway, Rochester, MN 55906  
(Silver lake plaza)  
8 AM

## **Kasson American Legion Post 333**

(507) 634-4353  
212 West Main Street , Kasson, MN 55944  
Third Thursday of the month, 8pm

## **Chatfield VFW Post 6913**

(507) 867-3144  
9- 2nd St SW, Chatfield, MN  
2nd Monday of the month 7:00pm

## **Eyota American Legion Post 551**

(507) 545-2688  
2nd Monday each month 6:30pm  
11 Madison Ave NW  
Eyota, MN 55934  
Legion Riders  
4th Wednesday each month 7:30pm

## **Pine Island American Legion Post 184**

(507)356-8991  
108 1st Ave SE  
Pine Island, MN  
2nd Monday of the month 7PM

## **Oronoco VFW Post 9647**

(507) 367-4635  
5 MN Avenue S  
Oronoco, MN 55960  
First Tuesday of each month 7pm  
Auxiliary meeting same time, separate meeting

## **Dodge Center American Legion Post 384**

(507) 633-6420  
401 Highway St W  
Dodge Center, MN 55927  
2nd Monday each month 7pm

## **SPAM All Women American Legion Post 570**

First Monday of each month 530pm  
American Legion Post 91  
809 12th St SW  
Austin, MN  
For more info contact Eileen Chao (507) 4374583

*“To promote the interests and welfare of veterans, their dependents and survivors and to enhance their quality of life through counseling, claims assistance, education, advocacy and special projects.”*

Veteran Services  
2100 Campus Drive  
SE, Suite 200  
Rochester, MN 55904

