



# VETERANS VOICE

Winnebago County Department of Veterans Services Newsletter

May 2024

## Manage Your VA Care While Traveling

For many, summer means more travel. And travel planning can feel overwhelming, especially if you have complex health needs. My HealtheVet, VA's online patient portal, makes it easy to manage your health care while traveling.

Whether you're traveling in-state or out of the country, you can rest assured knowing you'll have access to VA care regardless of where you are.

Follow these five tips to ensure your health care needs are met while you're away from home:

### 1. Notify your VA care team

VA highly recommends that you notify your health care team four to six weeks before travel, particularly if you need medication refills or regular medical appointments. Send a secure message through [My HealtheVet](#) to notify your provider of your upcoming travel.

### 2. Ensure you have up-to-date documentation

It's important to have up-to-date copies of all important documents, whenever you travel. Use My HealtheVet to print a health insurance wallet ID card to keep on hand while you travel.

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**“Twenty years from now, you will be more disappointed by the things you didn't do than by the ones you did do.”**

**- H. Jackson Brown, Jr.**



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### 3. Update your vaccines

Staying up-to-date on vaccines is important regardless of whether you're planning to travel. Can't remember when you were last vaccinated? Don't fret. My HealtheVet makes it easy to view and download your vaccination history with VA Health Summary. If you see that you're due for a vaccination - or if you're traveling to an area that poses a risk for tropical disease - schedule an appointment with your VA provider as soon as possible.

### 4. Manage your prescriptions

Be sure to pack enough medication refills to last your entire trip and extra in case of flight delays. Always pack your medications in your carry-on bag in case your checked luggage is lost or delayed. Discuss your current medications and the plan for refills with your VA care team. My HealtheVet's prescription tool makes it easier to manage your medication online.

### 5. Familiarize yourself with VA's telehealth options

If you have a diagnosis that requires routine appointments, telehealth can help you keep up with those appointments while traveling domestically. Through telehealth technologies and programs, VA works to connect Veterans and VA providers regardless of distance. Speak with your VA care team about whether telehealth is a right fit for your care, then schedule your virtual appointments through the online scheduling feature on My HealtheVet.

Generally, your VA Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT) is responsible for your care even when you travel. If you see a VA provider while traveling, care received at the alternate facility will be documented in your record so your PACT will be able to review and follow up with treatment options accordingly.

VA's goal is to ensure your quality of care is consistent across medical facilities. When you inform your PACT of your extended travel plans, VA can prepare the alternate site for your arrival if outpatient care is needed. Coordination helps to prevent any disruption in your care.

For more information, contact your PACT or Traveling Veteran Coordinator at your local VA facility or call toll free 1-877-222-VETS (8387) Monday through Friday between 7 am and 7 pm. Veterans are encouraged to contact the [Foreign Medical Program](#) when traveling abroad.

May  
is...

FACT:  
Lyme Disease is often  
misdiagnosed as chronic fatigue  
syndrome, multiple sclerosis,  
fibromyalgia, arthritis, or many  
other conditions.

## LYME DISEASE Awareness Month

AlisonSmith.com

### Lyme Disease Awareness Month

This May, National Lyme Disease Awareness Month invites you to enjoy the outdoors like you always would, but to be aware of the risks involved and how to avoid them.

Some common symptoms of Lyme disease include fatigue, neck stiffness or pain, jaw discomfort, joint aches, memory loss, vision problems, and fainting. However, by covering up exposed skin, using insect repellent, and periodically checking for ticks, you can enjoy all your normal outdoor activities. After being outdoors, make sure to check for ticks, especially behind the knees, under the armpits, and on the scalp.

#### Five Facts About Lyme Disease:

1. You can only get Lyme disease from a tick bite.
2. Lyme disease doesn't go away in all cases. Post-treatment Lyme disease syndrome affects 10% to 20% of Lyme disease patients.
3. Lyme disease is the most common disease spread by ticks in the Northern Hemisphere. It is estimated to affect 300,000 people a year in the US.
4. Blacklegged ticks, also known as deer ticks, are the specific species of tick that carry Lyme disease.
5. Lyme disease is a worldwide infectious disease and has been reported in all 50 states and on every continent except Antarctica.

# How to Identify Predatory Practices

“Claim Predators” is the term VA uses to describe aggressive companies or individuals that prey on Veterans and their loved ones and steal their disability entitlements. Predators will promise a 100% disability rating, unrealistic claim processing times, and charge thousands of dollars for services that trusted Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs) provide Veterans for free. Remember, only VA has the authority to determine disability ratings. VA is committed to informing Veterans about these exploitative practices, and emphasizing that Veterans and their families should not have to pay anything when they seek help in filing their initial benefit claims.

## How to identify a claim predator

Claim predators target Veterans’ benefits via mail, telephone or online channels. Here are a few unlawful red flags to watch out for from entities that are not accredited by VA:

- Charging high fees: Predatory companies charge absurd fees or require you to pay them a portion of your VA benefits. You should never pay a fee to file an initial claim for benefits.
- Making deceitful promises: No one can promise or guarantee a VA disability rating or an accelerated claims processing time.
- Require binding contracts: Never sign a contract to pay an unauthorized individual or company a percentage of your benefit payment in exchange for help with your VA claim.

The best way to prevent being preyed on is to educate yourself about these shady tactics and be aware of these red flags.

## How to protect yourself against claim predators

Veterans can shield themselves from fraudulent activities by being vigilant and adhering to a set of guidelines:

- Do not pay anyone to help you file an initial claim for benefits.
- Work with an accredited representative, VSO, or trusted attorney before filing a claim, appeal or providing personal information.
- Do not sign a contract agreeing to pay an unauthorized individual or company a percentage of your benefit payment in exchange for their assistance with your VA claim.
- Verify accreditation by utilizing the Office of General Counsel [accreditation tool](#) before filing a claim or providing personal information.
- Always review all forms and documents. Do not sign a fee agreement with someone or a company who refuses to sign a VA representative form (VA Form 21-22A).
- Understand accredited individuals may charge a reasonable fee for service regarding a denied claim; generally, no one should charge you a fee greater than 33%.
- Know you never have to make fee payments yourself. You can rely on VA’s direct payment process, where VA will directly pay your representative for securing your past-due benefits. If someone is unwilling to be paid that way, you should question why.
- Protect your personally identifiable information and never provide any systems login credentials, such as user IDs or passwords to VA.gov and eBenefits, to anyone to access your personal information.
- Be aware of companies that advertise they have special relationships with medical professionals and can guarantee your VA benefits award percentage.

## How to report fraud

If you miss a VA benefits payment, identify a discrepancy in payments or find suspicious activity with your direct deposit account, contact VA immediately at 1-800-827-1000. If a Veteran or loved one has been the victim of fraudulent activity, they should immediately [file a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission](#) (FTC). VA is dedicated to protecting Veterans from predatory practices. Remain vigilant and educate yourself about the proactive steps you can take to protect both yourself and your VA entitlements.



# Upcoming Events



## Military Veterans Museum & Education Center's 8th Annual Golf Tournament

All proceeds benefit the the Military Veterans Museum and Education Center



### EVENT DETAILS

Wednesday, May 29th, 2024  
Lake Breeze Golf Club  
6333 Ball Prairie Road  
Winneconne, WI 54986

9:00 AM Registration  
10:00 AM Shotgun start/scramble  
\$90.00/golfer - Includes green fees,  
cart, meals, & 2 drinks

Sign up as a foursome or as an individual in support of the Military Veterans Museum.  
Enjoy a great day of golfing at the Lake Breeze Golf Club

**RAIN OR SHINE**

### Box Lunch and Dinner

- Hole Events • Raffle Prizes
- Hole Prizes • Silent Auction

### Please RSVP by May 28th

Call Tom Sonneleitner at  
920-420-2030 or email  
tsonny4058@aol.com

Major Sponsors:  
**THRIVENT JASON LOWE  
AMCOR**



## 13th Annual Veterans Benefit & Ride



Sponsored by the Winnebago Detachment  
Marine Corps League & Auxiliary

Saturday, June 1, 2024

Marine Corps League  
4715 Sherman Road  
Oshkosh, WI 54901

Motorcycle Ride - Poker Run  
Gun Raffles, & Basket  
Raffles. Drawings begin  
at 7:15 p.m.

Registration starts at 9:00am  
Kick Stands Up at 11:00am

**OPEN TO EVERYONE AND  
ALL VEHICLES!**

Bikes, Trikes, Cars,  
Trucks, Etc.

\$20.00 per person  
(includes complimentary meal  
upon return for ride participants)



### ROUTE DESTINATIONS:

Eureka Landings - Eureka  
RoadRash Bar & Grill - Poy Sippi  
The Bridge Bar & Grill - Fremont  
Damn Yankees Watering Hole - Hortonville  
Woodshed Bar & Grill - Neenah

Proceeds to benefit Programs for Veterans & their Families.

Find us at:

Facebook @ 13th Annual Veterans Benefit & Ride  
www.winnebagodet357.org, or email winnebagomcl@gmail.com

## CONTACT US

Winnebago County  
Veterans Service Office

Oshkosh Location  
220 Washington Ave.  
Oshkosh, WI 54901  
(920) 232-3400

Neenah Location  
211 N. Commercial  
Neenah, WI 54956  
(920) 729-4820

Stay informed about benefits; join our e-mail list.  
Send a request to:

[CVSO@winnebagocountywi.gov](mailto:CVSO@winnebagocountywi.gov)

Visit us on the web at:

[www.winnebagocountywi.gov/veterans](http://www.winnebagocountywi.gov/veterans)



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

For a list of more events,  
check out our [calendar](#) !