

Post 90 Gazette



April 2021

Edited by Amy Ostler



SAVE LIVES Act allows VA to soon provide COVID-19 vaccinations to all Veterans, their spouses and caregivers

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden signed the SAVE LIVES Act into law today, expanding VA's legal authority to provide COVID-19 vaccines to all Veterans, regardless of their VA health care enrollment status, as well as Veteran spouses, caregivers and some beneficiaries.

The SAVE LIVES Act removed some of the legal limits on the medical care VA can provide to Veterans, based on [health care eligibility](#) and [priority groups](#).

See full story on page 2.



A veteran is someone who, at one point in his life, wrote a blank check made payable to his country 'for an amount of 'up to and including my life.'

The “**SACK LUNCH**” is a heartfelt story of compassion, respect and love. It renews our love for our brothers and sisters in arms. Take the time to read it and see where you can apply an act of kindness in your own life.

See full story on page 6

April is National Donate Life Month and COTA's 35th Anniversary Month

Sadly, 20 people in the United States die each day waiting for an organ transplant. One organ donor can save eight lives.

April is National Donate Life Month and COTA is asking everyone within The American Legion Family to go to www.RegisterMe.org and register to be a designated organ and/or tissue donor.

See full story on page 7



State Farm



Mike Ford Insurance



UNIFORM CENTER II



Commander's Column

Marti Bigbie

The Washington County Fair is in April this year - Korean Veterans will be recognized on the 15th of April 11:00am in the Harmony Building.

St Patrick's Day and Easter packages were delivered to the Veterans at Southern Utah Veteran Home to help bring cheer as they are still closed in - hopefully this will change.

After the Executive Board meeting the new Executive Board and Committee names will be released and sent to the membership. The recent schedule of events was emailed to all those that have current email addresses. Continue with the BUDDY CHECKS with friends, Veterans, neighbors - we do not want them forgotten. Ask if they need help as in most cases they are unsure to ask for help.



Commander Department of Utah

Marti Bigbie

We are close to the April goal of 95% but still have over 90 to go by April 14th (also the date that the reports are run for 2022 and any unpaid memberships will show on the roster unless you have notified us that they are not going to renew. Keep working on the CPR information due to Department by 6-1-2021. ALL stay safe

SAVE LIVES Act allows VA to soon provide COVID-19 vaccinations to all Veterans, their spouses and caregivers

Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs

March 24, 2021, 03:41:00 PM

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden signed the [SAVE LIVES Act](#) into law today, expanding VA's legal authority to provide COVID-19 vaccines to all Veterans, regardless of their VA health care enrollment status, as well as Veteran spouses, caregivers and some beneficiaries.

The SAVE LIVES Act removed some of the legal limits on the medical care VA can provide to Veterans, based on [health care eligibility](#) and [priority groups](#).

The expanded authority depends on readily available COVID-19 vaccine supply and requires VA to continue to prioritize vaccinations and healthcare delivery for our nation's Veterans enrolled in VA care.

"The SAVE LIVES Act increases the number of individuals who are eligible to get lifesaving COVID-19 vaccines from VA from 9.5 million to more than 33 million," said VA Secretary Denis McDonough. "Meeting the task of vaccinating this expanded population will be a tremendous undertaking for the VA and will require a significant increase in our allocation of vaccine supply, but I am confident that VA's workforce is up to the task."

VA is providing COVID-19 vaccinations to Veterans and employees per its [COVID-19 Vaccination Plan](#). As of March 24, VA has fully vaccinated 1,594,812 individuals, including Veterans, VA employees and federal partners.

The next steps in VA's prioritized expansion efforts are to offer the vaccine to all enrolled Veterans – approximately 9.5 million – followed by those outlined in the bill, as vaccine supply permits:

- Non-enrolled Veterans as defined in the new legislation, including those without service-connected disabilities and who have incomes above VA's threshold.
- Overseas Veterans who rely on the [Foreign Medical Program](#).
- Veteran caregivers who are enrolled in either the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers or the Program of General Caregiver Support Services.
- Veteran caregivers enrolled in certain Geriatrics and Extended Care Programs, such as Veteran Directed Care, Bowel and Bladder, Home Based Primary Care and VA's Medical Foster Home Program.
- [Civilian Health and Medical Programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs](#) recipients.
- Veteran spouses.

In March and April 2021, VA will conduct pilots of COVID-19 vaccination for individuals specified in HR1276 at select VA medical centers. These pilots will work through critical steps in the process including communications, operations including space and staffing, systems for registration, enrollment, and scheduling, documentation, and data transmission.

VA currently receives approximately 200,000 first, or single doses, of COVID-19 vaccine each week. VA estimates that it will need a minimum of 300,000 first or single doses of COVID-19 vaccine weekly to offer COVID-19 vaccination to an additional three million Veterans who are enrolled but not currently using VA health care. VA estimates that it will need approximately 600,000 first, or single doses, of COVID-19 vaccine each week to further expand vaccination to all individuals outlined in HR1276. First or single dose supply is the best indicator of VA's capacity to offer expanded COVID-19 vaccination.

Interested Veterans, their caregivers and Veteran spouses who qualify under the legislation can click [here](#) to get more information about COVID-19 vaccines at VA. Updates will be provided regarding the availability of vaccine supply and other resources.

U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs

You have questions. VA has answers.

Call VA today.

1-800-MyVA411

(1-800-698-2411)

The number to call when you don't know who to call.

You only need to remember **one number** for information on **VA care, benefits, and services** or to speak to a **live agent** for assistance!

1-800-MyVA411 serves all members of the Veteran and service member community seeking information or assistance.

LIVE ASSISTANCE
General information, directory assistance and technical support for VA.gov

VA HEALTH CARE
Eligibility, enrollment, locations and COVID-19

COMMUNITY HEALTH CARE
MISSION Act eligibility, copayments

NATIONAL CEMETERIES
Burial benefits, interment scheduling and headstone/Veteran marker

VETERANS CRISIS LINE
Immediate connection to caring, qualified responders

DEBT MANAGEMENT
Debt details, payment options and debtor rights

FACILITY LOCATOR
Locations of medical centers, benefits offices or cemeteries

BENEFITS ASSISTANCE
Information about a variety of VA benefits

HOMELESS VETERANS LINE
Information and support for homeless and at-risk callers

COVID-19 INFORMATION
Frequently asked questions and live assistance for COVID-related questions

Call for helpful information on:

- COVID-19 general information and updates
- Health care eligibility and enrollment
- VA benefits, such as disability, compensation and pension, education programs, caregiver support, insurance, home loans, and burial headstones and markers, among others
- The nearest VA medical centers, benefits offices, or cemeteries to Veterans
- Directory assistance and connection to all VA contact centers and VA Medical Centers
- Technical support for [VA.gov](https://www.va.gov)
- Debt and payment options
- Immediate transfer to the Veterans Crisis Line or the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans

Will I be able to speak to a live agent?

Yes!

When you call **1-800-MyVA411 and press 0**, you will reach a live agent for immediate assistance or connection to the right VA experts.

The VA Welcome Kit

A simplified guide to help you get the most out of your VA experience

Inside you will find an overview of VA benefits and services, important phone numbers and resources, and "[Quick Start Guides](#)" on specific programs, services, and topics.

Quick Start Guides

These handy "[Quick Start Guides](#)" will help you navigate your VA benefits and services, with checklists to keep you organized and on track to apply for them.

- [Apply for VA health care](#)
- [Get started with mental health services](#)
- [Get started with health services for women Veterans](#)
- [Understanding community care](#)
- [Accessing urgent care](#)
- [Apply for a disability rating](#)
- [Apply for education benefits](#)
- [Apply for burial in a VA national cemetery and for memorial products](#)
- [Understanding the modernized decision review process](#)
- [Get started with services for Veterans ages 65+](#)
- [Get started with Veteran state benefits and services](#)

- [Get started with Vet Center services](#)
- [Get started with caregiver benefits](#)
- [Apply for survivor benefits](#)

[Explore VA.gov to learn about your benefits](#)

The Sack Lunch -

I put my carry-on in the luggage compartment and sat down in my assigned seat. It was going to be a long flight. 'I'm glad I have a good book to read. Perhaps I will get a short nap,' I thought.

Just before take-off, a line of soldiers came down the aisle and filled all the vacant seats, totally surrounding me. I decided to start a conversation.

'Where are you headed?' I asked the soldier seated nearest to me.

'Petawawa. We'll be there for two weeks for special training, and then we're being deployed to Afghanistan

After flying for about an hour, an announcement was made that sack lunches were available for five dollars. It would be several hours before we reached the east, and I quickly decided a lunch would help pass the time...

As I reached for my wallet, I overheard a soldier ask his buddy if he planned to buy lunch. 'No, that seems like a lot of money for just a sack lunch. Probably wouldn't be worth five bucks. I'll wait till we get to the base.' His friend agreed.

I looked around at the other soldiers. None were buying lunch. I walked to the back of the plane and handed the flight attendant a fifty-dollar bill. 'Take a lunch to all those soldiers.' She grabbed my arms and squeezed tightly. Her eyes wet with tears, she thanked me. 'My son was a soldier in Iraq; it's almost like you are doing it for him.' Picking up ten sacks, she headed up the aisle to where the soldiers were seated. She stopped at my seat and asked, 'Which do you like best - beef or chicken?' 'Chicken,' I replied, wondering why she asked. She turned and went to the front of the plane, returning a minute later with a dinner plate from first class. 'This is your thanks.' After we finished eating, I went again to the back of the plane, heading for the rest room.

A man stopped me. 'I saw what you did. I want to be part of it. Here, take this.' He handed me twenty-five dollars.

Soon after I returned to my seat, I saw the Flight Captain coming down the aisle, looking at the aisle numbers as he walked, I hoped he was not looking for me, but noticed he was looking at the numbers only on my side of the plane. When he got to my row he stopped, smiled, held out his hand and said, 'I want to shake your hand.' Quickly unfastening my seat-belt I stood and took the Captain's hand. With a booming voice he said, 'I was a soldier and I was a military pilot. Once, someone bought me

lunch. It was an act of kindness I never forgot.' I was embarrassed when applause was heard from all of the passengers.

Later I walked to the front of the plane so I could stretch my legs. A man who was seated about six rows in front of me reached out his hand, wanting to shake mine. He left another twenty-five dollars in my palm.

When we landed, I gathered my belongings and started to deplane. Waiting just inside the airplane door was a man who stopped me, put something in my shirt pocket, turned, and walked away without saying a word. Another twenty-five dollars!

Upon entering the terminal, I saw the soldiers gathering for their trip to the base.

I walked over to them and handed them seventy-five dollars. 'It will take you some time to reach the base. It will be about time for a sandwich. God Bless You.'

Ten young men left that flight feeling the love and respect of their fellow travelers.

As I walked briskly to my car, I whispered a prayer for their safe return. These soldiers were giving their all for our country. I could only give them a couple of meals. It seemed so little...

A veteran is someone who, at one point in his life, wrote a blank check made payable to his country ' for an amount of 'up to and including my life.'

That is Honor, and there are way too many people in this country who no longer understand it.'

APRIL IS NATIONAL DONATE LIFE MONTH and COTA's 35th ANNIVERSARY MONTH

Children's Organ Transplant Association®

The Trusted Leader Supporting Families ... For a Lifetime

Dear Editor:

The Children's Organ Transplant Association (COTA) was founded in April 1986 when residents of Bloomington, Indiana, rallied around a toddler who needed a life-saving liver transplant. In less than eight weeks, the community raised more than \$100,000 to place the boy on the organ waiting list. But he died before an organ was found. Those community volunteers, along with his parents, turned tragedy into triumph by using those funds to help other transplant families. That was the beginning of COTA and those volunteers were our first Miracle Makers.

For 35 years, thanks to the help of the men and women of The American Legion Family, COTA has assisted thousands of children and young adults by helping to raise funds for a lifetime of transplant-related expenses. Extensive volunteer networks across the nation are working to ensure that no child or young adult needing an organ or tissue transplant is excluded from a transplant waiting list due to lack of funds.

We need your help today to make sure that tragedies, like the one that was the catalyst in founding COTA 35 years ago, are not repeated.

Sadly, 20 people in the United States die each day waiting for an organ transplant. One organ donor can save eight lives. April is National Donate Life Month and COTA is asking everyone within The American Legion Family to go to www.RegisterMe.org and register to be a designated organ and/or tissue donor.

You can become a COTA Miracle Maker. Find out how your Post, Unit, Squadron or Legion Riders can help a COTA transplant family near you by visiting COTA.org/Legion.

Sincerely,

Rick Lofgren, President
rick@cota.org

COTA's priority is to assure that no child or young adult is denied a transplant or excluded from a waiting list due to lack of funds. 100% of funds raised in honor of patients assist with a lifetime of transplant-related expenses.